

BUSH'S OILY FOREIGN POLICY • TERRY SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

# In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

August 20, 2001

## THE CASE OF THE MISSING H-BOMB



Jeffrey St. Clair investigates

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# In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

"... with liberty and justice for all"

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*In These Times* (ISSN 0160-5992) is published biweekly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 25, No. 19) went to press on July 20 for newsstand sales August 6 to August 20, 2001.

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**Subscriptions** are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For **subscription questions** and **address changes** call (800) 827-0270.

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## Publisher's Notes

**T**he energy crisis presents an opportunity for progressives to differentiate ourselves from economic conservatives and their culture of marketplace values. Conservatives act as if the earth's resources are limited only by the constraints of the open market. Progressives insist that the earth's resources should be used within a framework of sustainability.

This ideological disagreement translates into clear policy differences. The Bush administration plans to accelerate the construction of massive, centralized generating facilities that depend on fossil fuels. Progressives assert the need for developing smaller, widely distributed generating facilities that use renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power. Instead of a laissez-faire government that permits a few gigantic energy companies to manipulate prices at the expense of the consumer, progressives envision an activist federal government that dramatically increases industry oversight, institutes price caps and taxes the excess profits accumulated by these modern robber barons.

Progressives must insist that our leaders and the media tell the truth and refute the Bush administration's claims that oil and gas resources are infinite and conservation is not the basis of a sound energy policy. We are running out of fossil fuels, and the price of energy derived from carbon-based fuels inevitably is going to increase dramatically. We also need to acknowledge that our use of fossil fuels has precipitated the global warming crisis.

Instead of ignoring the problems, we need to help our citizens—particularly working families—prepare for the near future when fossil fuels are in short supply. This means a host of new programs and tax incentives to get our citizens to change their energy-guzzling ways. Our government officials and elected representatives need not only to talk conservation, but to provide financial incentives to promote this conservation through policies that support such things as attic insulation and consumer conversion to renewable energy.

Politically, progressives need to acknowledge that conservatives do not have a uniform attitude about energy. This politi-

cal reality can serve as a wedge issue for progressives, allowing us to use energy policy to divide economic and social conservatives. One way to do this is to emphasize the underlying values.

Progressives must point out that the Bush energy policy is based on a "live for today and damn the consequences" lifestyle that is contrary to both progressive and traditional values. The administration's policy is consistent only with the business values that currently govern America, values that are cynical, hedonistic and short-sighted. The classic RV bumper sticker—"We're spending our children's inheritance"—neatly sums up this lifestyle.

Local control is a key theme among social conservatives and thus provides another point for agreement. Progressives should emphasize that the Bush energy policy plays to giant energy corporations while the progressive philosophy emphasizes smaller, municipal entities and community control. Alternative energy is produced in small, local generating facilities as opposed to the current system's gigantic, old-fashioned generators with their hundreds of miles of transmission lines.

The progressive response to the energy crisis must emphasize that Americans can continue to enjoy a comfortable standard of living while dramatically decreasing

**There are viable alternatives to the Bush energy plan. Progressives need to stand up for them.**

their energy use. For example, we could invest in the development of a fuel-cell technology that could result in the widespread deployment of zero-emission vehicles. We could invest more in public transportation to provide working families with alternatives to driving. The government could enact rules that require cars, refrigerators and other major household appliances to be vastly more energy efficient. There are viable alternatives to the Bush energy plan. Progressives need to stand up for them and forge partnerships with likely allies.

As always, I welcome your feedback ([bburnett@inthesetimes.com](mailto:bburnett@inthesetimes.com)).

*Bob Burnett*

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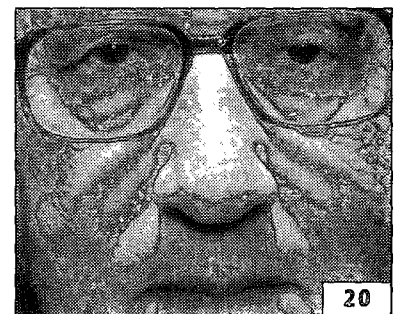
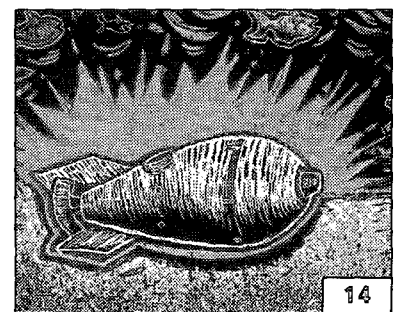
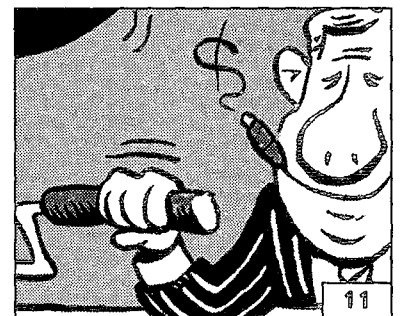
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# Letters

## Blue-Green Vision

John Nichols is right about the opportunity that faces both progressives and the Democrats in responding to the administration's tired, inept and feckless energy plan ("Teamsters not Turtles," June 25). He is right that the Bush-Cheney team clearly tried to run the old Nixon "hard hat" strategy of splitting blue-collar labor away from the rest of the progressive coalition with the promise of jobs.

But I would argue that we have less to fear from this wedge-driving effort than we do from our own inability to pick up the fumbled ball and run with it. While the administration pulled off a White House meeting, and got support from a predictable set of unions for drilling in the Arctic, that support came only after it was clear to any sensible observer that drilling the Arctic was, politically, a dead proposition.

As the House voted in June to prevent the expenditure of any federal funds for Arctic drilling or for oil leasing in Florida, under the Great Lakes or in our National Monuments, there was simply no evidence of union muscle behind the administration's efforts. Indeed, the administration now maintains that none of what was voted down was actually in its energy plan at all.

Meanwhile, blue-green conversations on a range of issues from trade to global warming are bearing fruit. The Sierra Club is filing an amicus brief with the building trades on Bush's efforts to kill project labor agreements, the rock on which the administration almost lost all labor support on energy. In California, labor unions and environmentalists have worked in solid coalition to save the state's economy and environment from Texas-based energy interests.

The old wedge just doesn't have much bite; the danger, instead, is that for fear of engaging each other, labor and environmentalists may miss the chance to move forward a bold and positive vision for the future. With the president's standing on energy slumped and seemingly frozen in the mid-'30s, a quick, nimble and energetic campaign could change the political landscape in ways we have not seen for decades. At this moment we need to worry less about what Bush and Cheney are up to, and more about what we may not be up to.

**Carl Pope**  
Executive Director  
The Sierra Club  
San Francisco

## Here Come the Brides

In his article "In Defense of Identity Politics" (July 9), Martin Duberman writes: "Is the gay movement ever going to be willing to take on the class dimensions of its own struggle? To date, it has not. And that is why most national gay organizations push for agendas (gay marriage, gays in the military) that do not resonate for, say, working-class dykes concerned about issues relating to shrinking real income or dead-end jobs or HIV or substance abuse or domestic violence."

I fully agree with the general premise that the "gay" movement has failed to take on the class dimensions of its own struggle. Still, a cornerstone of identity politics is the understanding that no one who is not a member of a particular group can really speak for that group. With this in mind, I wish to speak as a "working-class dyke" on what actually resonates for me.

Gay marriage ranks much higher for me personally than issues of substance abuse, domestic violence or HIV. Not to say that these aren't important issues to the community as a whole, but they are not the issues that impact me the most. As a mother, I must tell you that the right to enter into a civil marriage with my partner of eight years would be the single biggest step toward improving the quality of my life, as it would put me on a more equal footing with my ex-husband, now remarried himself, on issues of custody and visitation. I suspect that I am not alone in this, and I disagree with Duberman's implicit suggestion that same-sex marriage is not important to working-class women.

**Jill Bates**  
Birmingham, Alabama

## Teaching Tolerance

I can't tell you how well Anthony Chase nailed it in his investigative article "Violent Reaction" (July 9). I am a gay teacher in a rural school district in Pennsylvania who like Chase also thought after hearing the news of the Columbine shootings that Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold might well have been gay.

Chase too is correct in his summation that the "persecution of gay high school students, and students perceived to be gay, is endemic." As a gay adolescent, I suffered the same lot as many young gay teens suffer still. But it doesn't stop with students. Anti-gay sentiment in our public schools reaches beyond teens to teachers.

## Welcome and Adieu

These are days of mixed feelings here at *In These Times*. We are sad to see Associate Publisher Julie Fain depart for a job at *International Socialist Review*. We are pleased to welcome Joshua Rothkopf in her stead. Familiar to readers as one of our regular film reviewers, Rothkopf comes to us from *New Art Examiner*, where he was business and circulation manager.

As a gay teacher, I must cope with the hard fact that respect doesn't come easy for gay men and women in many of our nation's public schools. Teaching in a public school classroom can be challenging enough—gay or straight—but being gay certainly brings with it a set of challenges with which my heterosexual colleagues never have to deal. Add to that the fact that there is no anti-discriminatory legislation in Pennsylvania to protect homosexuals from losing their jobs on the basis of their sexuality, and you have a tenuous situation that makes it difficult to make key personal decisions that require long-term financial or geographical commitment.

I'm not looking for pity here. I knew it wouldn't be easy. I've chosen to teach because I believe that all kids need to see that it's O.K. to be gay and hold such a public position, and because I want to be certain that no child suffers like I did.

Chase is correct about something else: Learning can't happen if children feel unsafe and unaccepted in their respective environments. But I would take it a step further and posit that good teaching can't happen if gay teachers aren't given due respect. If Chase's article did anything it sounded an alarm that it's time we broach this difficult issue head-on and educate the public about the dangers of anti-gay sentiment, especially in our public schools, and its traumatizing and often tragic results on not just the gay children it targets, but on the community as a whole.

**Tim Luckenbaugh**  
Cassstown, Pennsylvania

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# Voting Rights in Peril

By Joel Bleifuss

**T**he struggle to expand democratic rights in the United States has been hard fought. Those who hold the reins of power have never willingly given them up. Thanks however to a succession of popular movements—against slavery, for workers rights, for women's suffrage and against Jim Crow—America has moved beyond the day when white, male property owners ruled absolutely.

Every citizen now can exercise their democratic right and vote for the candidate of their choice. But is that enough? In the last decade or so, the political playing field drastically has changed. Today, what counts most is not the right to vote, but the ability to influence electoral outcomes by giving "contributions" to candidates and political parties. In effect, the wealthy have found in the current campaign finance system a way to worm around the impediment of democracy.

With each successive national election, the amount of money funnelled into campaigns sets a new record. The Republican National Committee recently announced that in the first half of 2001 it raised \$48.6 million, 60 percent more than it raised in the same period in 1999, the last non-election year. The Democratic National Committee also set a record, taking in less than half that of the Republicans at \$23.5 million.

In effect, the current system allows the rich to disenfranchise the vast majority who are not rich. That injustice is at the crux of the campaign finance reform issue. Too often, however, this fundamental point is obscured in a debate that focuses on soft money or issue ads or spending limits.

How do we develop an electoral system where individuals are not allowed to use private wealth to exponentially increase their influence over who gets elected? The best way to go is a voluntary system of full public funding for candidates who agree to abide by spending limits and take no private financing. Public funding measures, promoted nationally by Public Campaign, are cur-

rently being implemented in Maine, Massachusetts, Arizona and Vermont. Groups in another 37 states are pushing such legislation forward.

In the short term, the McCain-Feingold/Shays-Meehan ban on soft money (the unregulated contributions to parties and fundraising committees) is a start. In the last election cycle, almost \$500 million in soft money was poured into campaigns. Unfortunately, unless the bill's House supporters can come up with enough votes to override House Speaker Dennis Hastert and bring the measure to the floor, the soft money ban is dead.

Public pressure could turn the tide, but voters are cynical, doubting whether politicians are willing to reform a system that operates to their benefit. This cynicism is compounded by a confusion generated by corporate media that has no desire to change a system from which it too benefits. Applauding the demise of the soft money ban, a *Chicago Tribune* editorial told readers that "the bill is a reminder that those who want to get

money out of politics are prepared to stifle a lot of free speech in the process." (Not to mention, to put a dent in the ad revenues of the *Tribune's* television holdings.) Defenders of the current campaign finance system, like the *Tribune* executives, contend that the money people provide to finance electoral campaigns is a form of speech protected by the First Amendment—a facile argument which ignores the fact that, in the words of Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, "money is property, not speech."

Those media institutions that support an overhaul of the system, like the *New York Times*, could help energize public opinion by being more proactive. One place to start would be to reform the current campaign finance lexicon. Are

**What counts is not the right to vote, but the ability to influence electoral outcomes by giving "contributions."**

the funds given by private interests to candidates really "contributions"? Isn't "payments" the more appropriate term? Did the giant oil and gas corporations pump \$26 million (78 percent of their political giving) into Republican campaigns in the 2000 election because they wanted to "contribute" to the democratic process?

No, they were providing "payments" for services yet to be rendered. ■



## Divided Kingdom

The solution to racial strife in Europe may be more immigration, not less

By David Bacon

LONDON—Race riots have engulfed Britain this summer—pitting the children of whites who lost jobs in the country's devastating deindustrialization against the sons and daughters of those who filled service jobs in the decades after World War II. While Britain has its own unique circumstances, the riots are reminiscent of the attacks on immigrant hostels in the former East Germany and those on North Africans in France.

With 130 million people worldwide living outside the countries in which they were born, immigration has become a permanent global phenomenon, provoking deep questions in Western industrial countries. Who is responsible for economic devastation and the lack of good jobs? Do all residents, legal and illegal, immigrant and native-born, have equal rights and status?

People displaced politically and economically in countries of the global south stream toward Britain, as they do toward all industrialized countries with jobs and higher standards of living. People coming from Britain's former colonies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean used to have broad rights to immigrate as members of the old British Commonwealth. But in the '80s, the Thatcher government ended that system. To get a residence permit now, immigrants must claim political asylum.

And asylum is increasingly difficult to obtain. "At present it is virtually impossible to apply legally to come here," says Jude Woodward, an organizer for the London-based National Assembly Against Racism. "If you're in China, you can't walk into the British Embassy and say, 'I'd like a visa to Britain to claim asylum.' No such visa exists."

So migrants come hidden in trucks or even in the wheel wells of airplanes. In April, Perry Wacker, a Dutch truck driver, was found guilty in a British court for causing the deaths of 58 Chinese

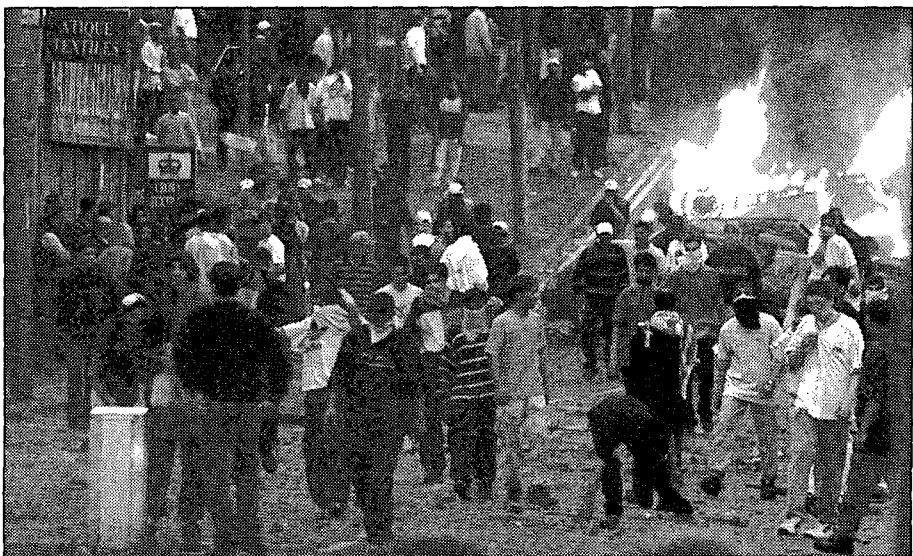
immigrants. They perished after he closed the air vent on his truck trailer, as he loaded it onto a ferry crossing the English Channel on a hot summer day. Wacker meant to keep any sound from alerting British customs agents who might suspect him of smuggling human cargo. His subterfuge was discovered nonetheless. When the trailer was opened, all but two of the people crammed inside, with room enough only to stand, had died from heat, thirst and lack of oxygen.

It was not hard for the court to reach its decision. Wacker was just a driver—the low man on the totem pole. Ying Guo of South Woodford was also convicted—she had lined up jobs for the border-crossers. But who else was responsible? The gangs of "snakehead" smugglers? European political leaders

then stand up to it. That's what's fed the public mood."

According to Woodward, almost all legal ways of immigrating to Europe have been closed off in line with agreements made within the European Union. "There's been tremendous concern among blacks," says Sabi Dalu, another assembly organizer. She uses the term "black" in reference to all people of color, including those of Asian, African and Caribbean ancestry. "There have been relentless attacks on asylum seekers and immigrants—the biggest since the '60s and '70s when you had waves of immigrants come in from the former colonies like India and Uganda."

"Racism doesn't exist just within Western, industrialized societies," Woodward adds, "but also in the relationship between those countries and



White and Asian youth clashed in the industrial city of Bradford on July 7.

who whip up anti-immigrant sentiment? Who benefits from a world economy where people flee debt-burdened countries to seek economic survival?

Woodward charges that the current anti-immigrant hysteria in Britain "has been politician-led and quite cynical." She says the recent elections here, in which Tony Blair was re-elected by a big majority, left a residue of increased racism. "Politicians on the right have campaigned against immigrants, saying the asylum system was being misused. Unfortunately, the center-left in British politics, like the Labour Party and the Labour government, have tended to buy into this argument rather

the rest of the world—the black majority of the human race."

Woodward says that the problem will only be resolved by more immigration, not less. "There's a mantra in establishment circles that says good race relations depend on restrictive immigration policies," she explains. "The only way to guarantee good race relations, they say, is to keep more black people from coming in, so that you have a sort of acceptable balance. This argument turns reality upside down. The most positive thing for race relations is to have more black people here, because the more integrated society becomes, the less space there is for racism." ■



## Gulag Chic

In Russia, the secret police are wildly popular

By Fred Weir

MOSCOW—With one of their own in the Kremlin and a reform-battered public yearning for order, the former KGB is enjoying an almost unprecedented revival of influence and prestige. Russia's men in the shadows are now seeking their place in the sun, and trying to reimpose social controls many people thought were just unpleasant memories. "Members of the security services are not only proud of themselves, they are also sure they have come to power in the past couple years," says Sergei Grigoryants, head of the Glasnost Foundation, a Moscow-based human rights group. "Their possibilities seem unlimited right now."

Russia's hugely popular president, Vladimir Putin, and growing numbers of his top appointees are veterans of the KGB's foreign intelligence wing. Not long ago, KGB service was a fact for a person to conceal; today it's positively fashionable. "Society is exhausted after a decade of tumultuous changes," says Alexander Gasparishvili, head of Moscow State University's social research center. "The Stalin-era abuses of the special services are far in the past. Now they are seen as the only incorruptible element of society, the ones who can fight crime and bring order."

Though Putin's record in office is still sparse on actual reformist achievements, there is no mistaking the upsurge in activity on his watch by the Federal Security Service (FSB), the KGB's domestic successor. "Peering out from behind today's FSB, one increasingly recognizes the familiar face of the KGB's Fifth Directorate, which was charged with combating domestic dissent," notes Konstantin Preobrazhensky, a retired KGB colonel turned critic of the agency, in the English-language *Moscow Times*. "In all [former Communist] countries—except Russia—the officers of such directorates have been dismissed from service. Here they have remained and are now occupying leading positions."

A wave of high-profile treason trials

managed by the FSB have targeted an American businessman, two Russian scientists, a diplomat and an environmentalist over the past year. In a twist redolent of Soviet-era intrigue, American Fulbright scholar John Tobin claims he was arrested for marijuana possession and sentenced to three years in a Russian penal colony after he rebuffed an FSB offer to work for them.

Many analysts believe the FSB deliberately has targeted people like Igor Sutyagin, an expert on military-civil relations who never had access to classified material, to intimidate all academics whose work touches national security issues. The case of Grigory Pasko, a journalist who gave videotapes of illegal nuclear waste dumping by the Russian navy to a Japanese TV station, is seen as a similar warning to Russian ecologists to stay away from their foreign colleagues.

The FSB's growing assertiveness is evident in a new directive to the Russian Academy of Sciences requiring all of the country's 910,000 registered scientists and scholars—not only those with access to classified material—to begin reporting their contacts with foreigners, at home or abroad. This Soviet practice was discontinued a decade ago, but the surprise is that at least some scientists want it back. "There has been chaos in science, and many Russian ideas and technologies have been sold for a song to the West," says Sergei Blagovolin, deputy director of the Institute of International Economy and World Relations.

While the drastic new rules are of dubious national security value, they are bound to greatly increase the power and hold of the FSB over Russia's impoverished and beleaguered intellectual establishment. "Scientists will line up to report on themselves and their colleagues," Preobrazhensky writes. "The KGB had a golden rule: Investigating a report begins with an investigation of the reporter. ... [This] will lead to nothing less than the destruction of Russia's academic intelligentsia."

Another ill-omen is a Russian Supreme Court decision this past March reviving the power of security agents to act on anonymous tips. That effectively reverses one of the great victories of *perestroika*. The first freely elected Soviet parliament, created under Mikhail Gorbachev, banned the practice in 1989,



REUTERS/NTV

Imprisoned Fulbright scholar John Tobin.

citing millions of Russians who were imprisoned, or worse, during the Stalin years without ever knowing the names of their accusers. "We thought we had seen the last of secret police investigating citizens just because someone anonymously denounced them, but now it's back," says Yevgeny Ikhlov, a lawyer with For Human Rights, an independent monitoring group. "It throws our society back to the worst of Communist times."

In yet another dismal signal, some Russian diplomats say off-the-record that tough Soviet-era rules are being reimposed in the Foreign Ministry as well, requiring all staff to report details of any contact with foreigners—regardless of whether the meeting was official, social or even accidental. Aside from a few liberals and human rights activists, the newly assertive and openly tough-talking FSB appears to be meeting mostly with public approval. A tracking survey conducted over the past eight years by the independent Vtsiom public opinion agency found that positive "confidence" in the security forces among Russians has gone from a post-Soviet low of 44 percent in 1995 to almost 60 percent last year.

For the moment at least, Russia's KGB is no longer feared by society but actually find themselves being feted—and even held out by some as saviors. "This won't last," Grigoryants says. "These security people are who they are, and they are already making the same old mistakes. Heroes, they're not." ■

# Patients Losing Patience

**W**ith Senate passage of the Kennedy-McCain patient protection bill on June 29, the debate about protecting Americans from HMOs appears to be coming to a head. Republicans, who have defeated patient protection legislation each of the past five years, can no longer smother the debate. The Democrats made patient protection their first order of business after taking control of the Senate, and polls indicate a majority of Americans support the Democratic position. Republican leaders in the House will schedule debate on this issue later this summer—not because they want to, but because they have to.

For the millions of Americans who decided long ago that the current HMO-dominated system is a disaster, the debate about patient protection raises mixed emotions. On the one hand, Americans want something done to stop the daily abuse of patients by HMOs. Sen. Edward Kennedy said enactment of the bill would mean “millions of Americans [would] no longer be powerless when their HMOs overrule their doctor and deny needed care.” On the other hand, as George W. Bush claimed, the bill would “drive up premium costs and cause many American families to lose their health insurance.”

Dr. Marcia Angell, a former editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine* who has long been an advocate of a single-payer system, seconded Bush's opinion. “Unfortunately I think it does make a very bad situation worse,” she told *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. “It will probably raise managed care costs, and employers, rather than pay higher premiums, will be more likely to drop health coverage altogether, or shrink the benefit package, or pass more of the cost back to their employees who will find that they can't afford it.”

Some experts criticized the entire debate over the bill as a distraction from the more important debate about universal coverage. As Uwe Reinhardt, a Princeton health economist, told the *New York Times*: “I think it was a ridiculous diversion of political energy that distracts from the truly shocking problems

of the American health care system—the uninsured, the elderly without drugs, and the medical error problem.”

What are we to make of this debate? Kennedy and the Democrats are unquestionably correct when they say quality of care is declining and that the Senate bill



will do something to stop it. Although Democrats have greatly exaggerated the effect that the bill will have on quality, it will stop some of the worst HMO abuses. This is primarily because of the right-to-sue provisions in the bill (without a meaningful right to sue, the rest of the bill will be easy for the HMOs to ignore).

But Republicans and other critics are also correct in claiming that patient protection legislation will raise premiums and add to the number of uninsured. The Congressional Budget Office's estimate of a 4 percent increase in premiums (1 percent of it due to the right to sue) is probably accurate; the Republican claim of 10 percent is inflated. But a premium increase is almost certainly going to result if our accidental president signs a bill with the right to sue in it.

This debate over protecting patients versus protecting premium-payers conveys the message that this is a zero-sum game. Pick your poison: HMO abuse or rising premiums and more uninsured people. But that is not a complete assessment of the pros and cons of patient protection legislation. There are two benefits to the Democrats' patient protection campaign that are rarely mentioned by the media.

The first is the public education that the patient protection debate has facilitated. Since 1996, when the HMO backlash began, public hostility toward

HMOs has grown enormously. That hostility has been fueled, in part, by the debate about patient protection and the additional media coverage that political attention to the issue has created. The hostility toward HMOs is weakening the industry and creating a new opportunity for advocates of fundamental reform. The other benefit of the campaign for patient protection is that its mere occurrence has caused some HMOs, seeing lawsuits in their future, to back away from some of the more visible tactics they use to deny services. Passage of the Senate bill will no doubt hasten this trend.

America is better off if HMOs are forced to inflict their pain through premium increases, which are highly visible and irritate vast swaths of the politically powerful business community and the middle-class, than it is if HMOs are permitted to inflict suffering in the form of inferior quality of care, which is nearly always invisible to all but the victim. This analysis is grim but hardly new. Widespread financial pain, not declining quality of care, is what put the health care crisis on America's

## Protecting patients versus protecting premium-payers is not a zero-sum game.

political agenda in the late '80s, and it was the HMO industry's promise of relief from that pain which took fundamental reform off the national agenda during the '90s. Now that premiums are rising again, financial pain is again pushing real health care reform toward the nation's front burner.

A real patient protection proposal would eliminate the HMO industry and establish a single-payer system. But by facilitating a public discussion of what's wrong with the current system, and by forcing HMOs to inflict a little more damage in the form of higher premiums and a little less in the form of inferior care, the campaign for patient protection is strengthening, ever so modestly, the demand for fundamental reform. ■



**A**fter only a few months as president, George W. Bush shocks visiting Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh by calling him into the Oval Office for an unexpected chat. After years of supporting Montenegro's independence from Serbia, Bush suddenly reverses American policy and adopts a hostile attitude toward the country after it freely elects a pro-independence government. Vice President Dick Cheney uncharacteristically takes an interest in Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest countries. Shortly after becoming secretary of state, Colin Powell arranges an April peace summit between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia. The peace talks, held in Key West, are not even interrupted by the capture of a Navy spy plane and its crew by China.

These sudden changes in foreign policy did not arise from any altruism on the part of the Bush team. Instead, they are emblematic of the immense power that Big Oil now exercises over Washington's foreign policy apparatus. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the respective relationships that Bush and Cheney have with two energy industry magnates—Bill Gammell of Cairn Energy and Steve Remp of Ramco Energy. Both companies are headquartered in Scotland.

Dubya's relationship with Bill Gammell has a historical precedent. In 1952, after his grandfather Prescott Bush, the Connecticut senator, made an entreaty, Gammell's father, James, invested in young George H.W. Bush's Zapata Petroleum Company. Zapata would figure heavily in the CIA's early covert operations aimed at toppling Cuba's Fidel Castro. Bush supplied two Zapata Oil exploration ships—the *Zapata* and the *Barbara J.*—for the CIA's abortive 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

Bill Gammell, whom Dubya calls "Billy," is a bona fide "FOW"—friend of 'W'—and their relationship dates back to 1959, when a teen-age Bush spent the summer at the Gammell family's Scottish estate. That was Dubya's first trip to Europe. Bush again traveled to Scotland in 1982 when he needed Billy to ante up some cash for his fledgling Arbusto Energy Company in Midland, Texas. Billy was one of 50 original investors who sank some \$3 million into the enterprise. Arbusto soon fell on hard times (though Bush made millions through a series of bailouts and sweetheart deals). Billy and the other investors got back just 20 cents on every dollar of their investment. Yet Bush returned to Scotland in 1983 for Billy's wedding. These visits were to leave an indelible mark on his worldview.

Unlike Dubya, who seemed to have the reverse-Midas touch when it came to the oil business, Billy Gammell struck pay dirt. In 1999, his Cairn Energy found oil off the west coast of India in the Gulf of Cambay—a lucrative addition to the company's already sizable natural gas interests in Bangladesh and oil wells on the Indian mainland. So when Dubya called the Indian foreign minister into the Oval Office, chances are good they were not discussing the humidity in New Delhi. One of Bush's main political backers,



# BIG OIL CHANGE

## What's really driving Bush's foreign policy

By Wayne Madsen

WASHINGTON

Enron, is expanding its operations to India and is already running a privatized electrical distribution system in Bombay.

And the shadow of Dick Cheney could not have been very far from that meeting. Cairn Energy and Halliburton, Cheney's old firm, are partners in developing Bangladesh's natural gas fields in the Bay of Bengal. Moreover, Cheney has particularly close ties to current Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheik Hasina Wazed and former Prime Minister and principal oppo-



## Big Oil may actually determine how international borders are drawn, which leaders remain as heads of state and what countries sit as members of the United Nations.

sition leader Begum Khaleda Zia. In 1998, Cheney went to Bangladesh and met the two women politicians. However, his real interest was in visiting the Sangu offshore natural gas fields, a joining venture between Halliburton (a 25 percent stakeholder), Cairn, Shell Oil and Bangladesh's state-owned Petrobangla energy company.

Bush and Cheney's interest in India and Bangladesh has coincided with concern about a growing Maoist rebellion in nearby Nepal. U.S. military leaders—including Adm. Dennis Blair, commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific—have called for increased American military support for Nepal's armed forces in putting down the insurgency. In May, Army Sgt. Maj. Jack Tilley told the House Armed Services Committee that the United States had troops in Nepal, but he did not elaborate on their mission. American military intervention on the Indian subcontinent is part of Blair's pet project called the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team, or "Tempest Express," which seeks to put the U.S. military in charge of "peacekeeping" and "crisis management" exercises in Asia and is particularly focused on military-to-military links with Nepal and Bangladesh.

Nepal's King Birendra, to the chagrin of Nepal's armed forces, had wanted to negotiate with the Maoists and avoid a bloody military confrontation. But in June, the reportedly drunken and enraged Nepali crown prince allegedly gunned down the king, queen, his two siblings and several high-ranking royal advisers before turning the gun on himself. Although Nepal's government stands by this explanation, much of the country's population suspects a wider conspiracy.

An American human rights official working in Kathmandu disclosed, on the condition of anonymity, that the new king, Gyanendra, has maintained a long-term relationship with the CIA (an organization with a long history of "offing" leaders around the world, especially where U.S. economic interests are at stake). Not surprisingly, Gyanendra supports taking a much firmer line with the Maoists, a position welcomed by the Pentagon, Langley and, naturally, the nervous Western oil companies that are increasing their profiles and profit margins on the subcontinent. A Maoist Nepal might encourage similarly minded rebels, such as the Maoist Naxals who operate in six neighboring Indian states, and other leftist guerrillas in Bangladesh and Burma—a nightmare scenario for risk-wary oil and natural gas investors.

The Indian Naxals, like their comrades in Nepal, have publicly claimed that the Nepali regicide was the work of the CIA and India's intelligence service. But such allegations have not just come from the rebels. Former high-ranking U.S. and Canadian intelligence officials who have been in contact with the Nepali expatriate community in North America quietly have confided that there is definitely "something" to allegations of U.S. intelligence involvement in the Kathmandu massacre.



While his relationship is not as close as Gammell's with Dubya, Ramco's Steve Remp has enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with Cheney and Halliburton. Remp, a dual U.S.-British citizen, has made millions from Ramco's oil discoveries in Azerbaijan. But pumping the oil from the Caspian Sea's Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli fields would not have been possible without the help of Kellogg Brown & Root, a subsidiary of Halliburton that provides infrastructure and logistics support around the world to customers ranging from oil companies to the Pentagon. Indeed, some of Ramco's top officials are veterans of Halliburton and close Cheney associates—such as Senior Executive Vice President Dan Stover, Halliburton's former vice president for global operations under Cheney.

In 1994, Ramco partnered in the Azerbaijan operation with Pennzoil, a company that was created when South Penn Oil Company was bought by Dubya's daddy's Zapata Petroleum Company (which itself had been launched with the help of a \$50,000 investment from James Gammell). In 1999, PennzEnergy company—the new incarnation of Pennzoil—was bought by Devon Energy of Oklahoma City. Although Ramco has sold its concessions in Azerbaijan to Amerada Hess (directors of which have included Bush I Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady), Devon continues to play an important role in oil production in the Caspian fields.

Devon too has important links to the Bushes. A former member of its board is Brent Scowcroft, national security adviser to Bush the Elder. And Devon President J. Larry Nichols was an outspoken critic of the Clinton administration's environmental policies, which he claimed hurt the energy industry. Not surprisingly, he was also an early donor to the Bush campaign, and, according to politicalmoneyline.com, he and his wife have donated thousands of dollars to GOP candidates over the past several years. These do not count the contributions to the GOP of Devon's own political action committee, officially registered in the midst of Bush's bruising primary battle with John McCain. According to the Center for Responsive

STEVE ANDERSON



Politics, the Devon PAC gave \$16,200 to GOP House and Senate candidates in the last election, but only \$1,500 to Democrats; and in 1999, Devon contributed \$20,000 to the Republican National Committee.

The interests of Devon and other U.S. oil companies involved in Azerbaijan are championed by the U.S.-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce. Its former co-chairman is Richard Armitage—an Iran-contra figure who was accused by Independent Counsel Lawrence Walsh of having detailed knowledge of the 1985 shipment of Hawk missiles to Iran while serving as an assistant secretary of defense. Armitage is now deputy secretary of state and Colin Powell's chief adviser. No wonder Powell did not waste any time in arranging the Key West peace talks between Azerbaijan's President Heydar Aliyev and Armenia's President Robert Kocharian. Since the two countries became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union, they have been fighting over the Azerbaijani-controlled but Armenian populated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. A bloody war lasted from 1992 to 1994 until a cease-fire was negotiated by Russia. The further development of trans-Caucasus oil pipelines cannot occur until the troublesome problem of Nagorno-Karabakh is settled.

The importance of settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to the Bush administration was apparent in comments made at a March 30 State Department briefing moderated by spokesman Philip Reeker. "In the 10th day of the Bush administration, President Bush dealt directly with this question," he said. "In the 10th week of the Bush presidency, we're having peace talks in Florida. There are communications at the presidential level, the level of the secretary of state, level of the national security adviser."

It seems the Bush administration can be spurred into lightning-fast action when oil is at stake. But the administration is also capable of Machiavellian ambivalence when it comes to oil politics. Consider Montenegro: During the Clinton administration, the United States encouraged Montenegro to secede from Slobodan Milosevic's Yugoslavia. The United States provided weapons, training, money and private military advisers to Montenegro's pro-Western president,

Milo Djukanovic. But after Milosevic was ousted in October, the prospects for Montenegrin independence began to change.

After his Azerbaijani success, Remp struck black gold again—this time off Montenegro's Adriatic coast. The Montenegro oil reserves may rival those found in the Caspian. Although Montenegro's government is pro-Western and has given Ramco a generous majority stake in the Adriatic oil profits, Djukanovic has been charged with corruption by some Western governments. As Arne Jan Flolo of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe told the *New York Times* last September: "Corruption is a time bomb ticking under the Djukanovic government."

In April, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher signaled a change in U.S. policy toward Montenegro, saying that Washington now favors "a Democratic Montenegro within a reformed and Democratic Yugoslavia." That statement was a far cry from Madeleine Albright's earlier prodding of Montenegro to break away from Yugoslavia. The Bush administration apparently has decided to wait for a signal from the oil barons. Recently, senior Bush advisers held secret negotiations with Montenegrin trade officials. Who will give the oil companies the best deal? Djukanovic in the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica or Kostunica in Belgrade? That decision may ultimately determine whether a Montenegrin or Yugoslavian flag will fly over the small Adriatic republic.

Much has been written and said about the influence of Big Oil over the policies of Bush and Cheney on global warming, drilling in the Alaskan wilderness, and their opposition to capping energy prices in California. Yet such is the power of the industry over the Bush administration, that Big Oil may influence, if not actually determine, how international borders are drawn, which leaders remain as heads of state and government, and what countries sit as members of the United Nations. Apparently, that's what \$26 million in political contributions (the amount Big Oil gave to Republicans during the last election) can buy. ■

Wayne Madsen is an investigative journalist based in Washington. He is the author of *Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa 1993-1999*, an exposé of recent U.S. involvement in inter-ethnic warfare in Africa.



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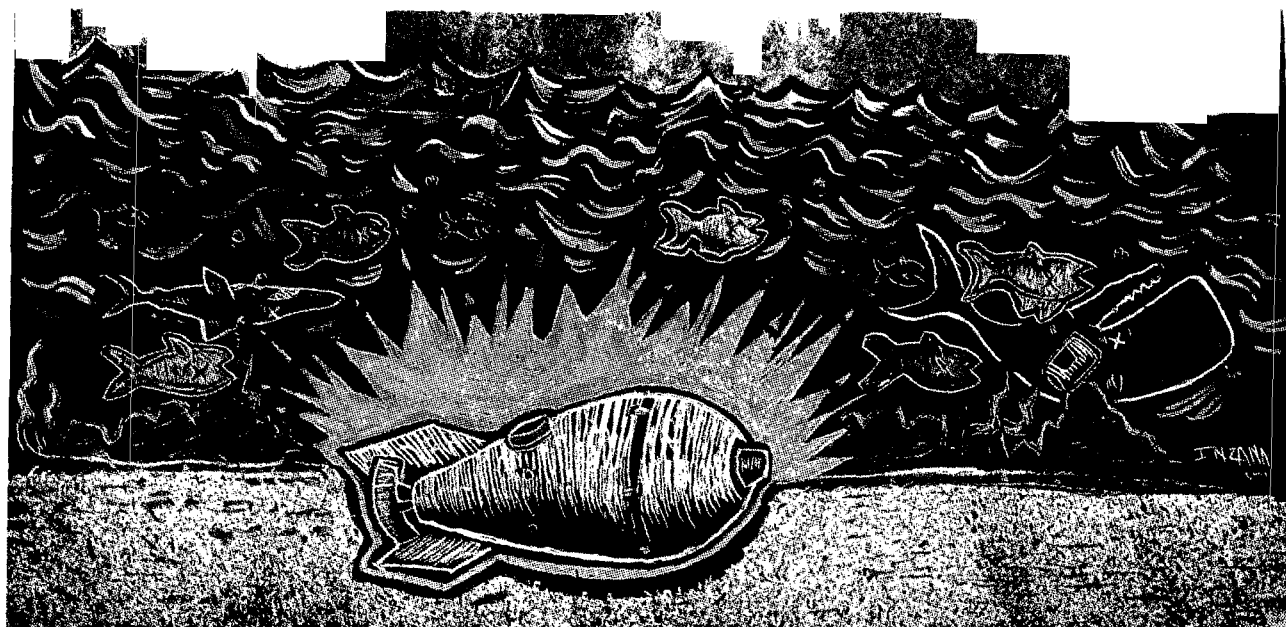
By Dan La Botz

A dynamic new labor movement emerged in Indonesia in the 1990s, helping to bring down the brutal Suharto dictatorship in 1998. Through rare personal interviews with the Indonesian activists who are leading the rebirth of struggle for democratic rights, La Botz draws valuable lessons for workers in the United States seeking to build international labor solidarity.

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# THE CASE OF THE MISSING H-BOMB

By Jeffrey St.Clair

Things go missing. It's to be expected. Even at the Pentagon. Last October, the Pentagon's inspector general reported that the military's accountants had misplaced a destroyer, several tanks and armored personnel carriers, hundreds of machine guns, rounds of ammo, grenade launchers and some surface-to-air missiles. In all, nearly \$8 billion in weapons were AWOL.

Those anomalies are bad enough. But what's truly chilling is the fact that the Pentagon has lost track of the mother of all weapons, a hydrogen bomb. The thermonuclear weapon, designed to incinerate Moscow, has been sitting somewhere off the coast of Savannah, Georgia for the past 40 years. The Air Force has gone to greater lengths to conceal the mishap than to locate the bomb and secure it.

On the night of February 5, 1958 a B-47 Stratojet bomber carrying a hydrogen bomb on a night training flight off the Georgia coast collided with an F-86 Saberjet fighter at 36,000 feet. The collision destroyed the fighter and severely damaged a wing of the bomber, leaving one of its engines partially dislodged. The bomber's pilot, Maj. Howard Richardson, was instructed to jettison the H-bomb before attempting a landing. Richardson dropped the bomb into the shallow waters of Warsaw Sound, near the mouth of the Savannah River, a few miles from the city of Tybee Island, where he believed the bomb would be swiftly recovered.

The Pentagon recorded the incident in a top secret memo to the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. The memo has been partially declassified: "A B-47 aircraft with a [word redacted] nuclear weapon aboard was damaged in a collision with an F-86 aircraft near Sylvania, Georgia, on February 5, 1958. The B-47 aircraft attempted three times unsuccessfully to land with the weapon. The weapon was then jettisoned visually over water off the mouth of the Savannah River. No detonation was observed."

Soon search and rescue teams were sent to the site. Warsaw Sound was mysteriously cordoned off by Air Force troops. For six weeks, the Air Force looked for the bomb without success. Underwater divers scoured the depths, troops tromped through nearby salt marshes, and a blimp hovered over the area attempting to spot a hole or crater in the beach or swamp. Then just a month later, the search was abruptly halted. The Air Force sent its forces to Florence, South Carolina, where another H-bomb had been accidentally dropped by a B-47. The bomb's 200 pounds of TNT exploded on impact, sending radioactive debris across the landscape. The explosion caused extensive property damage and several injuries on the ground. Fortunately, the nuke itself didn't detonate.

The search teams never returned to Tybee Island, and the affair of the missing H-bomb was discreetly covered up. The end of the search was noted in a partially declassified memo from the Pentagon to the AEC, in which the Air Force politely requested a new H-bomb to replace the one it had lost. "The search for this weapon was discontinued on 4-16-58 and the weapon is considered irretrievably lost. It is requested that one [phrase redacted] weapon be made available for release to the DOD as a replacement."

There was a big problem, of course, and the Pentagon knew it. In the first three months of 1958 alone, the Air Force had four major accidents involving H-bombs. (Since 1945, the United States has lost 11 nuclear weapons.) The Tybee Island bomb remained a threat, as the AEC acknowledged in a June 10, 1958 classified memo to Congress: "There exists the possibility of accidental discovery of the unrecovered weapon through dredging or construction in the probable impact area. ... The Department of Defense has been requested to monitor all dredging and construction activities."

But the wizards of Armageddon saw it less as a security, safety or ecological problem, than a potential public relations



disaster that could turn an already paranoid population against their ambitious nuclear project. The Pentagon and the AEC tried to squelch media interest in the issue by a doling out a morsel of candor and a lot of misdirection. In a joint statement to the press, the Defense Department and the AEC admitted that radioactivity could be "scattered" by the detonation of the high explosives in the H-bombs. But the letter downplayed possibility of that ever happening: "The likelihood that a particular accident would involve a nuclear weapon is extremely limited."

In fact, that scenario had already occurred and would occur again.

That's where the matter stood for more than 42 years until a deep sea salvage company, run by former Air Force personnel and a CIA agent, disclosed the existence of the bomb and offered to locate it for a million dollars. Along with recently declassified documents, the disclosure prompted fear and outrage among coastal residents and calls for a congressional investigation into the incident itself and why the Pentagon had stopped looking for the missing bomb. "We're horrified because some of that information has been covered up for years," says Rep. Jack Kingston, a Georgia Republican.

The cover-up continues. The Air Force, however, has told local residents and the congressional delegation that there was nothing to worry about. "We've looked into this particular issue from all angles and we're very comfortable," says Major Gen. Franklin J. "Judd" Blaisdell, deputy chief of staff for air and space operations at Air Force headquarters in Washington. "Our biggest concern is that of localized heavy metal contamination."

The Air Force even has suggested that the bomb itself was not armed with a plutonium trigger. But this contention is disputed by a number of factors. Howard Dixon, a former Air Force sergeant who specialized in loading nuclear weapons onto planes, said that in his 31 years of experience he never once remembered a bomb being put on a plane that wasn't fully armed. Moreover, a newly declassified 1966 congressional testimony of W.J. Howard, then assistant secretary of defense, describes the Tybee Island bomb as a "complete weapon, a bomb with a nuclear capsule." Howard said that the Tybee Island bomb was one of two weapons lost up to that time that contained a plutonium trigger.

Recently declassified documents show that the jettisoned bomb was an "Mk-15, Mod O" hydrogen bomb, weighing four tons and packing more than 100 times the explosive punch of the one that incinerated Hiroshima. This was the first thermonuclear weapon deployed by the Air Force and featured the relatively primitive design created by that evil genius Edward Teller. The only fail-safe for this weapon was the physical separation of the plutonium capsule (or pit) from the weapon.

In addition to the primary nuclear capsule, the bomb also harbored a secondary nuclear explosive, or sparkplug, designed to make it go thermo. This is a hollow plug about an inch in diameter made of either plutonium or highly enriched uranium (the Pentagon has never said which) that is filled with fusion fuel, most likely lithium-6 deuteride. Lithium is highly reactive in water. The plutonium in the bomb was manufactured at the Hanford Nuclear Site in Washington State and would be the oldest in the United States. That's bad news: Plutonium gets

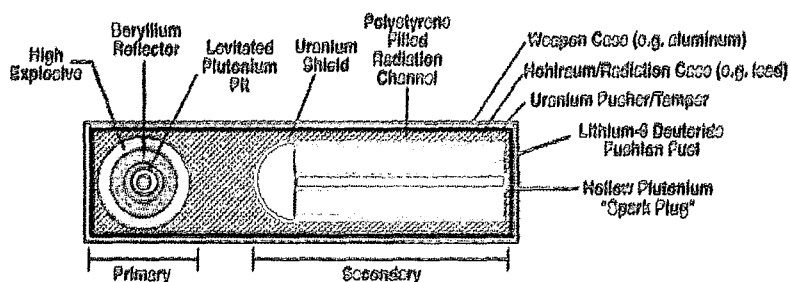
more dangerous as it ages. In addition, the bomb would contain other radioactive materials, such as uranium and beryllium.

The bomb is also charged with 400 pounds of TNT, designed to cause the plutonium trigger to implode and thus start the nuclear explosion. As the years go by, those high explosives are becoming flaky, brittle and sensitive. The bomb is most likely now buried in 5 to 15 feet of sand and slowly leaking radioactivity into the rich crabbing grounds of the Warsaw Sound.

If the Pentagon can't find the Tybee Island bomb, others might. That's the conclusion of Bert Soleau, a former CIA officer who now works with ASSURE, the salvage company. Soleau, a chemical engineer, says that it wouldn't be hard for terrorists to locate the weapon and recover the lithium, beryllium and enriched uranium, "the essential building blocks of nuclear weapons."

What to do? Coastal residents want the weapon located and removed. "Plutonium is a nightmare and their own people know it," says Pam O'Brien, an anti-nuke organizer from Douglassville, Georgia. "It can get in everything—your eyes, your bones, your gonads. You never get over it. They need to get that thing out of there."

The situation is reminiscent of the Palomares incident. On January 16, 1966, a B-52 bomber, carrying four hydrogen bombs, crashed while attempting to refuel in mid-air above the Spanish coast. Three of the H-bombs landed near the coastal farming village of Palomares. One of the bombs landed in a dry creek bed and was recovered, battered but relatively intact. But the TNT in two of the bombs exploded, gouging 10-foot holes in the ground and showering uranium and plutonium over a vast area. Over the next three months, more than 1,400 tons of radioactive soil and vegetation was scooped up, placed in barrels and, ironically enough, shipped back to the Savannah River Nuclear Weapons Lab, where it remains. The tomato fields near the craters were burned and buried.



This diagram shows the components of the missing bomb. The bad news: Plutonium gets more dangerous as it ages.

But there's no question that due to strong winds and other factors much of the contaminated soil was simply left in the area. "The total extent of the spread will never be known," concluded a 1975 report by the Defense Nuclear Agency.

The cleanup was a joint operation between Air Force personnel and members of the Spanish civil guard. The U.S. workers wore protective clothing and were monitored for radiation exposure, but similar precautions weren't taken for their Spanish counterparts. "The Air Force was unprepared to provide adequate detection and monitoring for personnel when an aircraft accident occurred involving plutonium weapons in a remote area of a foreign country," the Air Force commander in charge of the cleanup later testified to Congress.

The fourth bomb landed eight miles offshore and was missing for several months. It was eventually located by a mini-submarine in 2,850 feet of water, where it rests to this day.

Two years later, on January 21, 1968, a similar accident occurred when a B-52 caught fire in flight above Greenland and crashed in ice-covered North Star Bay near the Thule Air Base. The impact detonated the explosives in all four of the plane's H-bombs, which scattered uranium, tritium and plutonium over a 2,000-foot radius. The intense fire melted a hole in the ice, which then refroze, encapsulating much of the debris, including the thermonuclear assembly from one of the bombs. The recovery operation, conducted in near total darkness at temperatures that plunged to minus-70 degrees, was known as Project Crested Ice. But the work crews called it "Dr. Freezelove."

More than 10,000 tons of snow and ice were cut away, put into barrels and transported to Savannah River and Oak Ridge for disposal. Other radioactive debris was simply left on site, to melt into the bay after the spring thaws. More than 3,000 workers helped in the Thule recovery effort, many of them Danish soldiers. As at Palomares, most of the American workers were offered some protective gear, but not the Danes, who did much of the most dangerous work, including filling the barrels with the debris, often by hand. The decontamination procedures were primitive to say the least. An Air Force report noted that they were cleansed "by simply brushing the snow from garments and vehicles."

Even though more than 38 Navy ships were called to assist in the recovery operation, and it was an open secret that the bombs had been lost, the Pentagon continued to lie about the situation. In one contentious exchange with the press, a Pentagon spokesman uttered this classic bit of military doublespeak: "I don't know of any missing bomb, but we have not positively identified what I think you are looking for."

When Danish workers at Thule began to get sick from a slate of illnesses, ranging from rare cancers to blood disorders, the Pentagon refused to help. Even after a 1987 epidemiolog-

ical study by a Danish medical institute showed that Thule workers were 50 percent more likely to develop cancers than other members of the Danish military, the Pentagon still refused to cooperate. Later that year, 200 of the workers sued the United States under the Foreign Military Claims Act. The lawsuit was dismissed, but the discovery process revealed thousands of pages of secret documents about the incident, including the fact that Air Force workers at the site, unlike the Danes, have not been subject to long-term health monitoring. Even so, the Pentagon continues to keep most of the material on the Thule incident secret, including any information on the extent of the radioactive (and other toxic) contamination.

**T**hese recovery efforts don't inspire much confidence. But the Tybee Island bomb presents an even touchier situation. The presence of the unstable lithium deuteride and the deteriorating high explosives make retrieval of the bomb a very dangerous proposition—so dangerous, in fact, that even some environmentalists and anti-nuke activists argue that it might present less of a risk to leave the bomb wherever it is.

In short, there aren't any easy answers. The problem is exacerbated by the Pentagon's failure to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the situation and reluctance to fully disclose what it knows. "I believe the plutonium capsule is in the bomb, but that a nuclear detonation is improbable because the neutron generators used back then were polonium-beryllium, which has a very short half-life," says Don Moniak, a nuclear weapons expert with the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League in Aiken, South Carolina. "Without neutrons, weapons grade plutonium won't blow. However, there could be a fission or criticality event if the plutonium was somehow put in an incorrect configuration. There could be a major inferno if the high explosives went off and the lithium deuteride reacted as expected. Or there could just be an explosion that scattered uranium and plutonium all over hell." ■

## Oops, You May Be Glowing

**I**t hasn't been an easy couple of years for the Department of Energy: contaminated workers, nuclear fuel rods misplaced (or lost), Hanford continuing to leak its immortal poison into the Columbia River, the Wen Ho Lee debacle, embarrassing contempt citations for the cover-up at Colorado's Rocky Flats, campaign finance scandals, contractors screwing things up royally then declaring bankruptcy and on and on. So for the past few months, the agency, anxious to be at the center of the Bush nuclear project, which runs the gamut from new nuclear power plants to another round of underground nuclear weapons testing, has been in full image-polishing mode.

As part of this new PR rehab program, the DOE is allowing the public and the press into places that previously had been as difficult to access as Area 51. But when the secretive Savannah River nuclear site opened its gates for a public tour on July 9, things didn't quite turn out as planned.

Savannah River, the big DOE waste dump/weapons complex in South Carolina, has had its own share of problems, including a massive spill of highly radioactive tritium into the Savannah River in 1991. Plant managers

are trying to ease public anxiety enough so that the DOE can go forward with a Clinton-era plan to build a mixed-oxide fuel fabrication plant, a ludicrously dangerous scheme that involves the reprocessing of 36 tons of weapons-grade plutonium into fuel for commercial nuclear reactors.

The 25-person tour of the site included reporters, environmentalists and neighbors of the plant. The tour was supposed to highlight the DOE's newly tightened operations. But it turned out to reveal just how dangerously slipshod the agency remains. After the tour group left the site's F-Area "tank farm," where the most highly radioactive waste is stored in underground tanks, Savannah River workers failed to monitor the group for radiation exposure. "This was an appalling breach of safety standards," says Tom Clements, head of the Nuclear Control Institute, who was on the tour.

Savannah River managers admit the mistake, but blame it on a logistical screw-up. "We never intended for them to get off the bus there," says Rick Ford, a spokesman for the DOE.

This is refreshingly candid, but far from reassuring.

JSC



Few unions have a stronger reputation as scrappy and innovative organizers than the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) union. But despite some dramatic success stories, most notably the large-scale unionization of booming Las Vegas over the past decade, HERE President John Wilhelm is not satisfied with the union's progress or power, especially as its core industries are increasingly dominated by a few global corporations.

Although it has grown in the past few years (organizing about 7,000 workers so far this year), the union has only 260,000 members, down from 459,000 in 1971. At the union's convention here in mid-July, Wilhelm frankly told delegates that "the jury is out" on whether HERE could grow fast enough to survive as an independent union that effectively represents its members. But he ruled out merging with another union and outlined two ambitious strategies to accelerate organizing. First, he hopes to forge a more coherent national union out of the historically decentralized organization. Second, he wants to intensify the union's campaign on behalf of immigrant workers, launching civil rights-style "immigration freedom rides" to Washington next year. Immigrants make up large and growing majorities in many of the union's key locals, and by 2008 are likely to account for 80 percent of all workers in a 2 million worker hotel industry. By championing immigrant rights, Wilhelm believes the union can grow dramatically and do what's right.

The key to survival—and power—is strategically focused organizing, Wilhelm insists, and HERE will continue to concentrate in existing areas of strength, especially hotels and the gambling industry but also airports and food services. He has pledged to spend half of the international budget on organizing, coordinate a first-time national organizing campaign against a major hotel chain, and undertake major new efforts to organize the largely nonunion hotels and casinos in the South. But Wilhelm's strategy also involves vastly increased political fundraising, creation of a \$25 million strike fund, expansion of global links with other unions, and strengthening of the union's already formidable research team.

All of these expanded or new activities are intended to give workers more power to confront corporate opposition. For example, HERE increasingly uses its political clout to pressure developers of new hotels, convention centers and other projects to agree to be neutral during organizing drives and to recognize the union when a majority of workers sign union cards. Some local or state governments have made neutrality a condition, but often the union uses its ability to influence government approval of developments to negotiate agreements directly with their promoters.

The Boston local, for instance, now has nine neutrality and "card-check" agreements that could double its 5,000 members when hotels are opened (and potential agreements could triple the membership). Wilhelm also wants local unions, which bargain with individual hotels or metropolitan employer groups, to use their leverage at contract time to negotiate agreements that guarantee neutrality and card-check elections for any expansion, as locals in San Francisco, Las Vegas and New York have done to varying degrees.

Wilhelm, who began working for HERE in 1969, made his mark organizing Yale clerical workers in the '80s and later rebuilding the damaged Las Vegas local. When former union President Edward Hanley stepped down in 1998, following charges of his financial



STEVE MARCUS/REUTERS

HERE President John Wilhelm

# HERE and Now

John Wilhelm wants to  
radically transform  
the service sector

By David Moberg  
LOS ANGELES

mismanagement by a court-appointed monitor (see "Local Motion," page 19), Wilhelm was named president. The July convention elected him to his first full term and approved a greatly expanded national leadership team, including many more women (such as new Secretary-Treasurer Sherry Chiesa) and people of color. The union leadership is now dominated by a new generation of leaders devoted to aggressive organizing who better reflect the union's predominantly female and immigrant membership.

**S**o it was little surprise that a day at the beach for leaders gathered at the union's convention consisted of speeches along the oceanfront before a march on the luxury Loews Santa Monica Hotel, capped with street theater and the unfurling of a banner from a hotel window—"Justice for Loews Workers." For the past year and a half, the mostly Latino immigrant workers at Loews have pressed management to recognize the union through a card-check. The large numbers of undocumented immigrants who work in hotels are especially vulnerable to intimidation by employers, who threaten to call in the Immigration and Naturalization Service (despite INS policy to avoid intervening in labor disputes). In 1999, HERE's Minneapolis local successfully defended five undocumented Holiday Inn workers who had been threatened with deportation to Mexico after organizing a union.

The movement for immigrant rights, which is growing especially in Latino communities, may offer the key to large-scale organizing. "I see all the pieces of the puzzle," says Maria Elena Durazo, a new general vice president and leader of the Los Angeles local. "But I don't know how all the elements fit together." A few pieces fit together in Las Vegas earlier this year when the union threatened to hold public hearings with elected officials about the overwhelmingly disproportionate actions taken by the Rio hotel management against immigrant workers trying to organize. Before the hearings occurred, the managers reversed course and agreed to a card-check election, which cemented the union victory.

Wilhelm led the effort last year to reverse the AFL-CIO's position on immigration, advocating legalization of current undocumented workers and calling for an end to the policy of sanctions against employers who hire undocumented immigrants (which in practice are more often sanctions against workers). In June, Wilhelm joined a group of U.S. union leaders who traveled to Mexico to meet with Foreign Secretary Jorge Castaneda about upcoming talks

**Jorge Castaneda told HERE  
that immigration reform  
must be "either the whole  
enchilada or nothing."**

between the Mexican and U.S. governments over new immigration policy. U.S. unions want to prevent the creation of a new *bracero*, or guest worker, plan that would permit workers to temporarily enter the country but only to work for a specific employer, who would then have extraordinary power over them.

Castaneda, who accepted Wilhelm's unprecedented invitation to speak to the HERE convention, insisted that immigration reform had to involve a comprehensive package, including regularizing the status of Mexican workers currently in the United States, new legal channels for immigration, expanded temporary work visas, cooperation along the border and improved economic growth in Mexico—"either the whole enchilada or nothing."

**T**he union dialogue with Castaneda is part of a broader union strategy to fight for workers rights across borders. But HERE must contend with not only a transnational work force, but a trend over recent decades (especially during the '90s) toward concentrated control of markets by a handful of global corporations. Over most of HERE's history, employers were local, and the decentralized union matched the industry. But in just the past five years, the top 18 worldwide hotel companies have consolidated into eight firms, and a dozen gambling companies have shrunk to four with control of nearly half the U.S. market. "We all work for the same companies now," Wilhelm told delegates. "They plan nationally and globally. We don't. We pay a large price."

## PRISONS & EXECUTIONS The U.S. Model

This expanded issue of MONTHLY REVIEW examines the U.S. prison system from its historical roots to its present, deadly state—from inside and out—including essays on women, the disabled, education, the death penalty, globalization, and more.

Christian Parenti ♦ Michael E. Tigar ♦ Mumia Abu-Jamal  
Marilyn Buck & Laura Whitehorn interviewed by Susie Day  
Marta Russell & Jean Stewart ♦ Gregory Frederick  
Silvia Federici & George Caffentzis ♦ Staughton & Alice Lynd  
José Solís Jordán ♦ Monica Frolander-Ulf & Michael D. Yates  
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Wilhelm hopes to line up the expiration dates of major city hotel contracts, to set minimum standards for contracts, and to encourage more locals in a region to cooperate. Simply merging small locals into larger ones hasn't worked, he argues, and the union needs national unity and strength, especially in organizing at the increasingly large and powerful hotel chains. For example, although HERE still represents workers at Hilton's biggest and most profitable hotels, only 24 percent of Hilton workers are now in the union (down from 62 percent) as a result of acquisitions of nonunion hotels and once-cooperative Hilton's more aggressive stance toward organizing. Coordination of locals, the international and global union partners will be crucial in tackling companies like Hilton or Marriott. "We can't take on this industry one

hotel or local at a time," says San Francisco local President Mike Casey. But he also argues that the most successful and strongest locals have demonstrated that their power comes from involving union members more directly in on-the-job representation, bargaining and organizing.

If Wilhelm succeeds on a grand scale, HERE—along with the Service Employees and a few other unions—may be able to transform the service sector much the way that the CIO unions revolutionized mass production industry in the '30s. After all, Wilhelm says, those factory jobs became a ticket to economic well-being only because of unionization. Before that, they were seen as undesirable, high turnover, low-pay jobs filled mainly by new immigrants—just as many hotel and food service jobs are today. ■

## Local Motion: Putting Chicago Back on Track

Electing progressive leaders of national unions or the AFL-CIO is only one part of reviving the labor movement. It's equally important to breathe life into thousands of flabby, moribund local unions. But changing a local union is often a tough, controversial affair.

Thirty years ago, Chicago's Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 1 was a powerhouse, representing workers in all of the major downtown hotels. But the local—home base of Edward Hanley, the national union's president from 1973 to 1998—steadily has lost ground since then. With the recent opening of several new, nonunion hotels, the local now represents room cleaners, cooks, waiters, bartenders, bellmen and related workers in only 61 percent of the downtown hotel rooms.

Along with this decline, wages and benefits also have fallen far behind other major cities: Room cleaners make only \$8.43 an hour in Chicago compared to \$14.68 an hour in top-ranked New York. To make matters worse, the local—still the third-largest in HERE with at least 14,500 members—fell into financial disarray, despite assistance from the national union. With the downtown hotel contract up for renewal next summer, the ability of the Chicago local to improve its contract and to organize nonunion hotels is critical for the entire union, especially since hotels are increasingly owned by national or multinational corporations.

Putting Chicago on track is also important to John Wilhelm, who was named national union president in 1998 after Hanley retired in the wake of severe reprimands for financial misconduct from a federal monitor (appointed by the courts as part of a consent decree to resolve federal charges of organized crime involvement in the union). But as a contentious election for local officers in late June demonstrated, the Chicago local has proved a complicated case.

In 1999, when the monitor barred the president of Local 1, Hanley's son Thomas, from union office for a year, his successor was longtime staffer Terry Maloney. But in the November 1999 local elections—the first leadership contest in 16 years—Maloney faced a strong challenge from a group of insurgents led by banquet waiter Pablo Garcia, who attacked the integrity and union performance of Hanley and Maloney. Although Maloney won, the "Chicago Reformers" slate garnered a respectable 38 percent of the modest turnout.

Shortly afterward Wilhelm met with the local officers and, distressed at the state of the local, got them to agree to a "voluntary trusteeship." Wilhelm appointed Henry Tamarin, a longtime colleague from a New York local, as trustee and named Jim DuPont, an aggressive and imaginative organizer who headed the union's Oakland local, as assistant trustee. The trustees' strategy was to find leaders among workers in all job classifica-

tions, from cooks and maids to tipped employees, and train them to organize committees within the workplace and to conduct direct action. When Tamarin and DuPont arrived, they cut expenses and salaries, enforced dues collection and pushed staff to organize and represent workers more vigorously.

They kept the existing business agents and other staff, arguing they should be given a chance to prove themselves. The insurgent reformers at first welcomed the trusteeship, but then protested its presence and the continued employment of the former officials. Tamarin gradually concluded that many of the staff were not working effectively on his program for rebuilding the local. He began replacing some business agents with staff who had gone through training in Las Vegas or other thriving locals.

But the Reformers were still calling for an end to the trusteeship, and the Labor Department concluded that although there were adequate grounds to trustee the local, the union should have held a hearing. Research for the hearing revealed new evidence of misconduct by Maloney and other former officers, who were then fired and replaced with staff from other HERE locals. Although the internal union hearing officer concluded that the local had serious problems, Wilhelm decided in May to avoid continued litigation over the extension of the trusteeship and called for elections on June 27.

Slates led by Maloney and Garcia—former rivals who cooperated but did not overcome differences to form a common slate—both focused harsh attacks on Tamarin and his "Better Contract Team," leveling accusations of racism, financial misconduct and incompetence, as well as portraying Tamarin's forces as outsiders taking over the local. Tamarin campaigned mainly on his experience and the promise of a strong campaign for a better contract. Tamarin had the advantage of incumbency, money and a staff that campaigned vigorously.

Tamarin won with nearly 48 percent of the vote (to 29 percent for Garcia and 23 percent for Maloney. While turnout increased from two years ago, Garcia kept nearly the same level of support, and Maloney lost half of his. But both losing slates are filing challenges on numerous charges. "The international mounted a very cynical and corrupt campaign," argues Reformers vice presidential candidate Martin Preib, who insists that "there's no meaningful difference between Hanley and Wilhelm."

Tamarin, who intends to reach out to supporters of the opposing slates, recognizes that he faces a challenge in uniting the local, building committees, and motivating the members for the possibility of a major strike in just a year. "The support we got is because people do want a better contract," he says. "That gives us the opportunity to work together to make it happen." DM

# Take Him Away

By Doug Ireland

**T**wenty-seven years after Richard Nixon was chased from the White House by a nation sickened by his crimes, the architect and author of some of that administration's most heinous and

**The Trial of Henry Kissinger**  
By Christopher Hitchens  
Verso  
159 pages, \$22

felonious acts still walks among us, fawned upon by the business, policy and academic establishments, lavishly paid for his pronouncements, consulting for the likes of CBS and ABC News, even cavorting with Jay Leno, and, above all, making multiple fortunes as *consigliere* to the world's most rapacious and iniquitous multinational corporations.

Even supposedly sophisticated Americans seem to have forgotten just how sanguineous the consequences of the Nixon-Kissinger tandem were for the unfortunate people of places like Chile, Bangladesh, Iran, East Timor and Cyprus, not to mention Indochina. Fortunately, Henry Kissinger has now met his match in Christopher Hitchens.

*The Trial of Henry Kissinger* begins by recounting Kissinger's role as a double agent in the Republican destabilization of Paris peace negotiations on Vietnam—engaged in by the administration of Lyndon Johnson—during Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign. No less an establishment figure than Richard Holbrooke (then a senior LBJ negotiator) says that "Henry was the only person outside of the government we were authorized to discuss the negotiations with. ... It is not stretching the truth to say the Nixon campaign had a secret source within the U.S. negotiating team."

At the same time, Dr. K was advising the Nixon camp on how to scuttle the talks, which they did by using a "back channel"—the infamous "Dragon Lady," Anna Chennault—to get the South

Vietnamese to "hold on" and refuse the Johnson proposal.

"One has to pause for an instant to comprehend the enormity of this," Hitchens writes. "Kissinger had helped elect a man who had surreptitiously promised the South Vietnamese junta a better deal than they would get from the Democrats. The Saigon authorities then acted, as [Johnson advisor William] Bundy ruefully confirms, as if they did indeed have a deal. This meant ... four more years of an unwinnable and undeclared and murderous war, which was to spread before it burned out, and was to end on the same terms and conditions as had been on the table in 1968."

Once ensconced in the White House as Nixon's foreign policy right hand (he was, as Hitchens underscores, Nixon's "very first appointment"), Kissinger was deeply involved in micromanaging the war. Hitchens demonstrates by a masterful synthesis of various sources—the work of the respected historian Lawrence Lifschultz, the annotated diaries of Nixon's chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman, (partially) declassified government documents, interviews with surviving witnesses—that Kissinger was directly responsible for deliberate massacres of civilians, from the notorious "pacification" campaigns like Operation Speedy Express (in which at least 10,000 Vietnamese villagers were killed) to the secret bombings of Laos and Cambodia, which were given the repulsive code names "Breakfast," "Lunch," "Snack," "Dinner" and "Dessert."

Thus Haldeman's diary records for March, 17, 1969: "Historic day. K's 'Operation Breakfast' finally came off at 2.00 PM ... K really excited, as was P[resident]; or again the next day, 'K's 'Operation Breakfast' a great success. He came beaming in with the report, very productive.' These bombing raids caused at least 350,000 civilian deaths in Laos and 600,000 more in Cambodia.

**T**hen came Chile. In September 1970, that country chose as its president the Socialist Salvador Allende, who was anathema to the multinationals doing business there like ITT, Pepsi and Chase Manhattan—Nixon supporters all. Kissinger "had previously neither known nor cared about Chile, describing it offhandedly as 'a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica,'" but he lost no opportunity to curry favor with Nixon by making Allende a priority target. At an Oval Office meeting with Kissinger and CIA Director Richard Helms, Nixon snarled his wishes for Allende's elimination. From Helms' contemporaneous notes of the meeting: "Not concerned risks involved. No involvement of embassy. \$10,000,000 available, more if necessary. ... Make the economy scream. 48 hours for plan of action."

As chairman of the Forty Committee, Kissinger not only oversaw but





spurred on the formation of a working group at CIA headquarters whose purpose was "a strategy of destabilization, kidnap, and assassination designed to provoke a military coup" against Allende.

The first step in this plan was to get rid of the chief of the Chilean General Staff, Gen. René Schneider, a conservative who was nonetheless opposed to any military meddling in the electoral process. The CIA put a price on Schneider's head, offering \$50,000 to any Chilean officers willing to kidnap him; Helms later said that "we tried to make clear to Kissinger how small the possibility of success was," but Dr. K ordered them to press on. After the first attempt to grab Schneider failed, CIA cabled its Santiago station demanding urgent action, since "Headquarters must respond ... to queries from high levels." The CIA's director of covert operations, Thomas Karamessines, later testified to the Senate Intelligence Committee that "high levels" referred directly to Kissinger.

After yet another bungled kidnapping attempt, Schneider was finally murdered on October 22, 1970. Three more years of meticulously managed sabotage of Chile's entrenched democratic tradition culminated in Allende's death in the coup led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet on September 11, 1973.

**M**uch of this information has already come out in dribs and drabs over the years; it is Hitchens' merit that he assembles it all with prosecutorial skill aimed unerringly at his target. But he also raises the veil on a number of episodes that have received little or no attention.

Take for example the July 1974 coup in Cyprus, mounted by the junta then in power in Greece, that toppled and exiled the Cypriot president, Archbishop Makarios, and triggered a Turkish invasion that keeps the island bitterly divided to this day. Hitchens shows how Kissinger "made himself an accomplice in a plan of political assassination [of Makarios] which, when it went awry, led to the deaths of thousands of civilians, the violent uprooting of almost 200,000 refugees, and the creation of an unjust and unstable amputation of Cyprus which constitutes a serious threat to peace a full quarter-century later."

Kissinger later claimed he never knew that a coup was in the works. In fact he

had multiple warnings—from his own State Department Cyprus desk, from Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright, and even from the *National Intelligence Daily*. Indeed, the head of the Greek armed forces, Gen. Grigorios Bonanos, wrote in his 1986 memoir that a message of "approval and support" for the coup was received from Nixon and Kissinger's chosen intermediary with the Greek junta, Thomas Pappas.

Pappas was a conservative Greek-American businessman who had endeared himself to Nixon by delivering a contribution of \$549,000—in cash—to John Mitchell for Nixon's 1968 campaign. The money came directly from the KYP, the Greek equivalent of the CIA.

**Henry Kissinger is  
celebrated in society  
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"the authentic  
touch of raw and  
unapologetic power."**

"Its receipt was doubly illegal," Hitchens notes. "Foreign governments are prohibited from making campaign donations ... and given that the KYP was in receipt of CIA subsidies there existed the further danger that American intelligence money was being recycled back into the American political process—in direct violation of the CIA's own charter."

Exiled Greek journalist Elias P. Demetracopoulos, a foe of the fascist junta in Athens who had briefed Fulbright on the Cyprus coup, provided this information to Democratic National Committee Chairman Larry O'Brien, who publicly called for an investigation. Was it information on this "Greek connection" that motivated Nixon's burglars to break into O'Brien's office at the Watergate? As Hitchens puts it, "Considerable weight is lent to this view by one salient fact: When the Nixon White House was seeking 'hush money' for the burglars, it turned to Thomas Pappas to provide it."

Hitchens' chapter on a plot to kidnap Demetracopoulos from Washington and

murder the thorny journalist breaks new ground. The Greek ambassador to Washington at the time has said that Kissinger was "fully aware of the proposed operation" and "most probably willing to act as its umbrella." But Kissinger personally intervened with Sen. Frank Church to squelch any investigation of the plot by the Senate Intelligence Committee on the (unspecified) grounds of "national security."

**I**n an afterword titled "The Profit Margin," Hitchens shows how "there is a perfect congruence between Kissinger's foreign policy counsel and his own business connections." For example, Kissinger was a staunch defender of the People's Republic of China in the wake of the massacre in and around Tienanmen Square in June 1989, writing that "no government in the world would have tolerated having the main square of its capital occupied for eight weeks by tens of thousands of demonstrators."

While the client list of Dr. K's consulting firm, Kissinger Associates, is secret—indeed, "contracts with 'the Associates' contain a clause prohibiting any mention of the arrangement"—some of the clients are known. Kissinger "assisted several American conglomerates, notably H.J. Heinz, to gain access to the Chinese market," Hitchens writes. "He assisted Atlantic Richfield/Arco to market oil deposits in China. ... Six months before the massacre in Tienanmen Square, Kissinger set up a limited investment partnership named China Ventures, of which he personally was chairman, CEO and chief partner." The firm's brochure explicitly states that it only takes on projects "that enjoy the unquestioned support of the People's Republic."

Hitchens was inspired to write this essay in part by the arrest in London, on a Spanish warrant, of the retired Chilean dictator Pinochet. Since it was written, Slobodan Milosevic has been dragged off in manacles to face war-crimes charges in The Hague. Kissinger's latest book, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?*, is a turgid *tour du monde* that serves as a prospectus for future Associates clients, but this partly ghost-written tome is unremarkable save for an impassioned chapter attacking the Pinochet arrest and the concept of inter-

national jurisprudence that allows for transnational trials of war criminals.

But in the new climate symbolized by the arrest of Pinochet (who will almost certainly escape trial) and now of Milosevic (who won't), Hitchens argues that Kissinger "may be found liable for terrorist actions under the Alien Tort Claims Act, or may be subject to an international request for extradition, or may be arrested if he travels to a foreign country, or may be cited for crimes against humanity by a court in an allied nation."

Victims of the ethnic cleansing of the British colonial island of Diego Garcia in the '70s, who were displaced to make room for a U.S. military base, have a case that has already won a victory in the British courts—a case in which Kissinger is cited for his role in "forced relocation, torture and genocide."

*The Trial of Henry Kissinger* confirms Hitchens' reputation as the most skilled political essayist and polemicist this country possesses—fortuitously, thanks to the native Brit's desire to escape from Maggie Thatcher. In the interests of full disclosure, I should say I've been a friend of Hitchens since he came to this side of the Atlantic. Reading his incisive, mor-

dant prose is a tonic, for he captures not only what's wrong about Kissinger, but what's wrong with us:

The pudgy man standing in black tie at the *Vogue* party is not, surely, the man who ordered and sanctioned the destruction of civilian populations, the assassination of inconvenient politicians, the kidnapping and disappearance of soldiers and journalists and clerics who got in his way? Oh, but he is. It's exactly the same man. And that may be among the most nauseating reflections of all. Kissinger is not invited and fêted because of his exquisite manners or his mordant wit (his manners are in any case rather gross, and his wit consists of a quiver of borrowed and second-hand darts). No, he is sought after because his presence supplies a *frisson*: the authentic touch of raw and unapologetic power. ... I've noticed, time and again standing at the back of the audience during Kissinger speeches, that laughter of the nervous, uneasy kind is the sort of laughter he likes to provoke. In exacting this tribute, he flaunts not the "aphrodisiac" of power (another of his plagiarized *bons mots*) but its pornography. ■

Terry Southern was born in Texas in 1924, and it's tempting to say that he never left. Regardless of where he went afterward, he liked to carry with him a certain belt-buckle-grabbing and whiskey-snorting Texan bravado. After a brief stint in the Army toward the end of World War II, he enrolled in a couple of colleges before finally hoofing it to Paris to commune with the American literary expatriate crowd. Although by no means a writer who simply played up his friendship with other more famous writers, some of Southern's best work comes in his recollections of these times and people.

From a short and rather oblique tribute to Kurt Vonnegut published in the *Evergreen Review*, Southern describes meeting Vonnegut with George Plimpton so:

Indeed, there was hardly a more princely figure on either bank of the Seine than the Lincolnesque Plimpton, striding down the Boul'Mich, his black cape flaring about him like the plumage of some giant regal predator.

"You there," I cried out, when I was sure who it was, just crossing the street in front of us, "you Vonnegut!"

"What in great devil," exclaimed the Plimp, startled into annoyance by the abruptness of my shout, imperious eyebrows furrowing darkly, "who are you shouting at in the streets now?" he demanded, adding with a derisive chuckle, "yet another of your wog-hemp *confreres*?"

## Southern Exposure

By Chris Barsanti

**S**ome writers are just made for posterity. The great novelists who inspire, delight and enrage over the years in a series of (generally lengthy) novels that plumb the depths of the American soul, the Roths, Updikes, Bellows—the literary establishment knows what to do with them. Lifetime coverage, for good or

bad, by all the major journals, of course, and, upon their passing, the procession of biographical tomes, reissues and the occasional discovery of a lost book or fragment.

But what do you do with a guy like Terry Southern? Yippie raconteur, literary prankster, good ol' boy just trying to make a go of it in the writing world, he rarely pretended to be a serious writer of any kind (even though he always took it seriously). His work covered journalism, novels, screenplays, all the notches in the belt of the working scribbler. There are probably no defining "masterpieces" in his work, nothing that encapsulates his worldview in a way that could be taught in a college survey course. But the pages collected here in the flash and funny *Now Dig This*, scattered and profane recollections of Paris, the '60s and the counterculture, among other things, are nevertheless essential. Though how, exactly, is impossible to say.

Like other American writers in Paris (whom he referred to as "some interesting Quality-Lit types") soon to scandalize their native land with novels considered too salacious and debauched for the general public, Southern achieved his first real success with Maurice Girodias' Olympia Press. Girodias (or "Gid" as Southern called him) published *Candy* in 1958. Co-written with poet buddy Mason Hoffenberg, the novel concerned the erotic adventures of the titular "fabulous, blue-eyed, pink-nippled, pert-derriered darling" in the West Village who falls in love with a humpback. It was originally conceived as a short story during what Southern termed his "Cocteau/opium" period. So pornographic that even the French government banned it initially, *Candy* was later published with a much tamer cover in the

### Now Dig This:

#### The Unspeakable Writings of

Terry Southern 1950-1995

Edited by Nile Southern and

Josh Alan Friedman

Grove Press

263 pages, \$25

bad, by all the major journals, of course, and, upon their passing, the procession of biographical tomes, reissues and the occasional discovery of a lost book or fragment.



United States as *Lollipop* and became an underground hit.

**N**ow *Dig This* is not very concerned, however, with Southern's fiction escapades like *Candy* and his other novels, *Blue Movie*, *Flash and Filigree*, *The Magic Christian* and *Texas Summer* (though it does contain many references to *Candy* and an amusing outline for *Blue Movie*). The collection, edited by musician Alan Jay Friedman and Southern's son Nile, was started by Terry and Nile two decades ago. The final product is a study not just of Southern's non-novelistic writing, but of how he lived as a writer. Like Hunter S. Thompson without the preening ego, Southern's magazine sketches and epistolary ramblings are notable often less for what they're saying than how it's being said, and in what state of mind.

Southern was almost a better talker than a writer, which is possibly why the editors have bookended the volume with interviews. His fiction never seems without a comedic sparkle, yet there's always a formality to the product that rarely pops up in his free-flowing bebop nonfiction. The section of *Now Dig This* called "Behind the Silver Screen" might as well have been retitled, simply, "Kubrick." Even though Southern worked on many other screenplays, including *The Loved One* (with Christopher Isherwood) and *The Cincinnati Kid* (with Ring Lardner Jr.), it was his collaboration with Stanley Kubrick on *Dr. Strangelove* that has come closest to earning him a guaranteed place in the literary firmament.

Unlike much of the writing on Kubrick—which has a tendency to treat him less as a man than a dark, abstract conglomeration of godlike cinematic impulses—Southern treats him as just another guy in his circle of friends: "Big Stan Kubrick." Southern recalls the man as someone who "who scarcely let as much as a trouser pleat go unsupervised." This article, "Strangelove Outtake: Notes from the War Room," is quite possibly the gem in the whole book, not just for its wry look at the filming of the movie (the scene in which Southern meets up with

Slim Pickens in England, fresh off the Western rodeo circuit, is simply a hoot), but for its loving and truly cinematic description of the infamous pie-fight scene that explodes in the Pentagon War Room just at the film's climax—and which was ultimately cut.

Elsewhere, in "Fiasco Reverie" Southern details the experiences of his friend Boris Grgurevich as a baffled par-



"Burroughs and I, of course, are veritable paragons of decorum."

ticipant in the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Starting off with the CIA's lavish overexpenditure on just about everything, the story follows Boris through his time in a Guatemalan "training camp" so riddled with corruption and laziness and lacking in even the merest modicum of military discipline that it rivals anything Joseph Heller could ever have dreamed up. The story kicks into high comedy, once "the invasion" begins:

Through a curious diversionary tactic of our own we had put *all the supplies* on that one [sinking] ship. (That strategy, I later learned, was based on a chess theory called "King Forward," well thought of at CIA headquarters, but apparently not yet fully developed.) It was disheartening to watch her go down; but the L.S.T.s plowed ahead—G-2 had promised quick capitulation of the adversary at the first show of strength.

**T**o keep things in high gear, the book immediately follows with "Grooving in Chi." In an act of hipster hubris never since equaled by a mainstream magazine, in 1968 *Esquire* got the idea to send what Southern snarkily termed "a hard-hitting

investigative team" to Chicago to cover the Democratic National Convention. This team consisted of Southern, William "Willy Bill" Burroughs and Jean "Jack" Genet. There is possibly no other non-assassination American political event of the time that has been covered from more angles than the '68 convention, but "Grooving in Chi" makes it seem fresh, tragic and hilarious all over again: "We had one hell of a time actually getting admitted to the hall, despite all the proper credentials. Burroughs and I, of course, are veritable paragons of decorum—but [Allen] Ginsberg and Genet, it must be admitted, are pretty weird-looking guys."

Whatever else he may have been, Terry Southern was always a man who wanted to live the writer's life, to write and be in the company of writers. The last two sections of *Now Dig This* are devoted to his many reminiscences, tributes and critical examinations of writers and the writing life. Burroughs pops up several times (most notably in a scene where Southern and Burroughs debate jocularly the merits of a sackful of prescription drugs Southern had just received from a doctor friend), and there are affectionate portraits of Abbie Hoffman, poet Frank O'Hara and Southern's hero, Edgar Allan "King Weirdo" Poe.

A giggly hipster with a penchant for dirty jokes and wry tales, Terry Southern existed in a vale somewhere between the Quality Lit aspirations of the Plimptons and Styrons and the goofy antics of countercultural clowns like Hoffman. He wanted to tell stories and get people to laugh, whether it was in a Kubrick film or in a skit for one of the early seasons of *Saturday Night Live* (most of which, it must be noted, never aired). What else can you say about the man who, when approached by Kubrick in the early '80s to help him adapt Arthur Schnitzler's experimental and lugubrious *Traumnovelle* (what would years later become the film *Eyes Wide Shut*), suggested in a letter that Kubrick "go the comedy route"? ☐

Chris Barsanti, a Chicago freelancer, wrote in the May 14 issue about James Ellroy.

# Four of a Kind

By Hillary Frey

In the late spring of 1954, a 13-year-old Joan Baez and her 9-year-old sister Mimi went to see traveling troubadour Pete Seeger perform at Palo Alto High School. The concert was a benefit for the California Democratic Party, but

## Positively 4th Street

By David Hajdu  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
328 pages, \$25

Washington Square Memoirs  
Various Artists  
Rhino Records

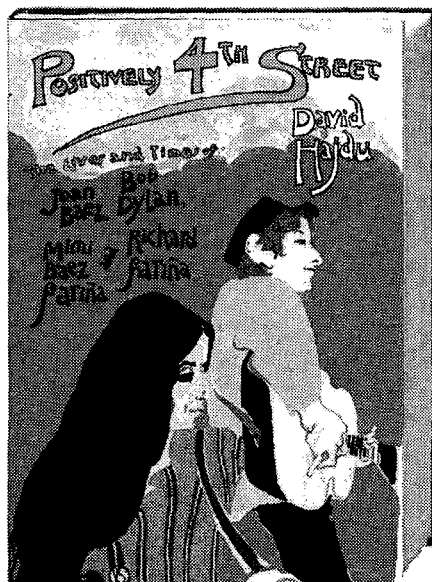
Seeger, who'd been blacklisted from major concert halls, was using the event for his own mission—to teach his fans how to assert their power as individuals through music. “We don’t need professional singers,” Seeger coached. “We don’t need stars. You can sing.” Although his political point eluded young Joan and Mimi, at least a part of Seeger’s message reached them both. After the concert, their Aunt Tia remembered, “Mimi and Joan both announced that they decided they wanted to sing.”

So the sisters got guitars and worked on their voices. Joan went on to become queen of the urban folk revival, making the coffeehouse scene in Cambridge, cutting records for the folk-focused Vanguard label, selling out the Hollywood Bowl in 1963, touring and sleeping with Bob Dylan. Struck with her parents during Joan’s rapid ascent and discouraged by her big sister from jumping into the scene herself, Mimi practiced music in her bedroom mostly, though she too eventually cut a few records in the early ’60s, with her husband, Richard Fariña. Joan and Mimi were close; both were beautiful and gifted. But, as it goes with sisters, they had their issues. Dylan and Fariña had theirs too.

Let me warn you—this essay is not about that old fuzzyhead Bob Dylan. David Hajdu’s fantastic *Positively 4th Street: The Life and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Fariña and Richard Fariña*—which I’m sure is (to borrow a word from Fariña) the grooviest book I’ll ever get to write about—tells the engag-

ing story of the way these four lives intersected at one cultural moment, not how three of them revolved around Dylan. Still, reviews have tended to focus on the haggard bard, coupling Hajdu’s book with one or more of the other tie-ins to Dylan’s 60th birthday: Howard Sounes’ new biography *Down the Highway*, Clinton Heylin’s updated *Bob Dylan: Behind the Shades Revisited* or the DVD reissue of *Dont Look Back*. Generally, it has been concluded that Dylan is a liar, genius and sublime jerk who royally screwed over Joan Baez but made some really great records so, hey hey, it’s all right. But there’s so much more to the story.

Let’s start with Fariña. Post-college, he wandered through New York City, cruising Village haunts like the Folklore Center and Folk City, drinking with the “writers” at the White Horse Tavern and toting around a little black book filled with telephone numbers of “people with pads.” Inevitably, he met



**When Joan, Bob, Mimi and Richard all moved in together, life got even more interesting.**

Carolyn Hester, the beautiful queen of the folk scene in the pre-Baez era. It was 1960; he was hanging at the White Horse, she was dining there with the ridiculously influential—and corrupt—*New York Times* folk music critic Robert Shelton. Since “it was Dick’s nature,” as Fariña’s Village buddy Kirkpatrick Sale put it, “to find the most attractive thing and go after it,” Fariña went straight for Hester, marrying her just 18 days after that first meeting.

This union made Fariña an auxiliary member of the folk scene, which was rapidly evolving. What began as a disorganized group of kids strumming away their weekends in Washington Square Park had turned into, oddly enough, a market. Clubs, coffeehouses, record labels, music publishers and shops were prospering, while performers were getting more professional. Woody Guthrie, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Leadbelly and Odetta were succeeded by middle-class kids making the once-earthly music sound polished and pretty. Peter, Paul and Mary were put together by Albert Grossman (who would become Bob Dylan’s manager) and Joan Baez was on a quick rise. The folk craze—filling in the big blank space between those early, promising sounds of rock and the arrival of the Beatles—was even making its way to Europe.

In the winter of 1962, Fariña made his way to Europe too, by boat. When Hester followed him a month later by plane, she was shocked to find him famous in London—not as a writer, but as a dulcimer-playing folk singer. Hester, feeling Fariña was stepping on her turf, was pissed. In an effort to make up, Fariña suggested taking a romantic trip to Paris.

Enter Mimi Baez, who was living with her mother and father in Paris, struggling to finish high school through correspondence courses. One afternoon, she was invited to a picnic with her sometime boyfriend Todd Stuart, Fariña, Hester, John Cooke (of the Charles River Valley Boys) and Scottish folksinger Alex Campbell. But Fariña’s charms, always laid on thick, weren’t muffled a bit by the presence of Hester or Stuart. “At one point,” remembered Mimi, “[Fariña] was telling stories and carrying on and getting us laughing. ... I laughed so hard that I threw up my sandwich in his face!”



Hester left Paris for the United States shortly after that afternoon; Fariña went back to London. Their marriage was all but officially over.

In London, Fariña maintained a constant party in a borrowed home with artist/folksinger Eric von Schmidt (Dylan stopped by a few times, too), and wooed Mimi by mail with poems and pushy, entertaining letters that would have bowled over any 17-year-old girl with a penchant for adventure. (Fariña—who fabricated an even crazier past than Dylan—claimed to have blown up a submarine for the IRA and aided revolutionaries in Cuba. He also told his friends that he carried a concealed weapon most of the time and had a metal plate in his head.) Despite disapproval from the Baez clan, including Joan—who worried that Fariña was really trying to get to her—Fariña, nine years her senior, secretly married Mimi when he returned to Paris in the late spring of 1963.

Around this time, Hajdu notes, Joan sent Mimi a batch of records from her new home in California's Carmel Highlands. When *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* arrived, it had a note clipped to the sleeve declaring, "My new boyfriend." Mimi played the record for Richard, who liked the songs, but heard them as a challenge—the first of many, in Richard's mind, to be issued by Dylan. Although he was still at work on his novel, he began plotting his next course to fame: songwriting and performing with his new wife—Joan Baez's sister!

That summer, Mimi and Richard joined Joan in Carmel. In September, when Dylan showed up to move in with Joan, life for all four got even more interesting. Mimi and Joan constructed their lives around their men, who pounded out their masterpieces in the morning on noisy typewriters and, apparently, ate little. The sisters grew closer after their long stretch apart, while Fariña and Dylan swapped pieces of written work and nurtured crushes on each other's woman.

Although Dylan went back to New York after about a month, the bond



Fariña and the Baez sisters, happily unplugged.

between him and Joan strengthened, even as their politics began to differ. (Rather, Joan got her politics and Bob stopped pretending that he had any to start with.) Mimi and Richard were making music too; they eventually put out their own record with Vanguard, *Celebrations for a Grey Day*. Joan, to the extent she allowed herself, supported them; she performed one of Fariña's more political songs, "Birmingham Sunday," to her consistently enormous crowds. And for a short while, life was bliss. In a letter to her mother, Joan even reported that she and Dylan "have such fun! Wow and he takes baths and everything." For another month, the foursome's party shifted across the country to Albert Grossman's house in upstate New York. Then the inevitable crash.

**W**hen Dylan—who by this point had become hugely famous riding on Joan's ever available back—mentioned that he was meeting with a book editor about publishing some of his prose-poems (eventually released as *Tarantula*), Fariña, who'd been pounding on his own manuscript for years, was furious. He went for a long walk to calm down and came back covered in mud. "He was terribly upset," remembered Mimi. "He never let himself look that messy." (The ever-vain Fariña actually had his blue jeans dry-cleaned and pressed.)

Meanwhile, Bob and Joan's dual concert tour of the East Coast went miserably; Dylan, forsaking his protest-song roots for the hard-driving, personal

compositions on his new record *Bringing It All Back Home*, alienated both audiences and Baez, who had finally hooked into Pete Seeger's plan and was regularly devoting a part of her performance time to speaking out for peace. Even though she ended up accompanying Dylan on his tour through Great Britain in 1964 (a torturous time documented in D.A. Pennebaker's *cinéma-vérité* masterpiece *Dont Look Back*), the end had pretty much arrived for folk's royal couple.

Writing off the very

scene he rode in on, Dylan expressed his feelings this way: "Folk music," he told the *Times*' Shelton, "is a bunch of fat people."

Ultimately, Fariña triumphed over Dylan in prose, publishing the raucous novel *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me* with Random House in 1966. It's a roller coaster of a book, winding together a campus in revolt, a search for true love and lots of drugs through an unrestrained, beat-like narrative; Thomas Pynchon, Fariña's friend from college, described the book as "com[ing] on like the Hallelujah Chorus done by 200 kazoo players with perfect pitch."

But even as Fariña felt the relief of success, his marriage to Mimi slid downhill. She felt helpless to change her lot—Richard never taught her to drive a car, allowed her to have a checkbook or even to read her own mail—while her husband and sister became an inseparable pair, deciding to record a rock album together with Richard as producer. (Joan, thankfully, came to her senses and refused to release the record.)

One evening after a book signing, Fariña threw a surprise party for Mimi's 21st birthday. During the festivities, but only after changing into a pair of hip-hugging blue jeans, he went for a motorcycle ride with another party guest, from which he never returned. Before he died in the crash, however, Fariña had left the idea for his next book to settle with his editor, Jim Silberman; it would be a memoir of his times with Mimi, Joan and Bob.

*Positively 4th Street* is great for what it is: a glimpse into four lives at a certain time, no strings attached. A lot of stars, both bright and dim, from the Cambridge and Greenwich Village scenes pass through Hajdu's pages too. But the deep roots of the movement are only glossed over. Harry Smith, whose *Anthology of American Folk Music* is the most important collection in this vein, is conspicuously absent, as is, for the most part, Woody Guthrie, who inspired Dylan early on to write a song that went, get this, "Hey hey Woody Guthrie, I wrote you a song."

If you're curious about what the revival actually sounded like, listen to the aptly titled *Washington Square Memoirs*, a new boxed set from Rhino. Spanning three compact discs, it's a good survey of the sounds of the time. Starting with Guthrie, Odetta and Seeger and moving through Hester, Phil Ochs, Judy Collins and Peter, Paul and Mary, you can really hear how the times in the folk scene were a-changin'.

As a straight listen, however, it's a little tough going. The revival's big tent included English ballads that singers like Baez drew upon, hillbillyish knee-slappers and the protest songs that most of us associate with the peace movement—with lots of hybrids in between—so the collection lacks the musical consistency and mood that allows a record to really move a listener. The transitions from song to song are jarring, and the inability of some folks to actually sing is, well, remarkable.

Bob and Joan are represented by two ballads, among the best in the box; Richard and Mimi are present with "Pack Up Your Sorrows." Their songs are spaced apart on the collection, unconnected. But after reading *Positively 4th Street*, it's impossible to hear them that way. Here's Joan, showing Bob her politics; there's Richard and Mimi trying to catch up with Joan. And then Bob, represented by a love song, with no indication that he would soon plug in, turn around and write a scathing sort of tune that would sum up everything for him exactly: "Love Is Just a Four Letter Word." ■

**Hillary Frey** is assistant literary editor of *The Nation*.

# The Free Spot

By Karl Erickson

**T**he art world decided, long ago, that a work of art can be anything. Beginning at least as far back as Marcel Duchamp and his *Fountain*, an upside-down urinal, any form of action by an artist could be validated as art. This once revolutionary idea has become so commonplace that gallery and museum viewers can calmly contemplate dead sharks, elephant dung or a man serving Pad Thai without having an ontological debate of what they are looking at. The playing field is wide open. Howard Singerman, the catalog essayist for *Public Offerings*, the current exhibition at the Geffen Contemporary at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, puts it this way:

The possibilities are endless. ... By now, "anything" and "everyone" no longer feel like freedom or liberation; rather, they are felt as a kind of terror. ... If art is not the "skills" of drawing or the other *métiers*, then how can one know what to do, where art is, or who is an artist? ... Or how can the name "art" still be meaningful, still necessary in the face of its freedom, in the face of "everything"?

This is the place art and artists are in now, a period of anyone or anything, existing in this "free spot in society," in the words of American performance artist Chris Burden. While any place in culture that can claim to be a zone of unfettered experiment should be valued, it also comes with a different set of issues. As Singerman points out, there is a kind of terror: If art can be anything, then what makes it special? What's the point?

*Public Offerings* promises some answers. The exhibition's stated purpose is to present "breakthrough works by 25 of the most important artists to emerge in the late 1980s and early 1990s, all graduates of the leading schools in Los Angeles, New York, Berlin, London and Tokyo" and "to examine similarities and differences in regional identities." All of the work was made while the artists were still in or after having just graduated from school.

These artists all came of age at a time when the infrastructure of the art world

was in a state of rearrangement following the late-'80s bust in the art market. The problems facing the artists in the exhibition were twofold: What should they make or do *as artists*, and how should they differentiate themselves from the crowd? The problem is different from that faced by prior generations, because the focus has slipped from the artworks to the artists themselves. The art-world-celebrity fixation of *Public Offerings* shows this, and on this level the show is successful.

But the show unfortunately fails to explore what makes this art worthwhile, even though most of these artists—some of our best—are exploring this relatively new terrain of the cultural "free spot" in interesting ways. No longer are they pushing the envelope of what art can be, they are looking at what art *does*, which is not a minor distinction.

**C**onsider Laura Owens' 1997 painting, *untitled*, of a blue field with bird-shapes casting shadows on the sky. The painting gets its charge by triggering a sense that something is not quite right after a few moments of more traditional viewing. The realization hits that birds, even these blobby shorthand versions, wouldn't cast shadows *on the sky*—thus playfully shattering any notion of illusionistic space. In this way, the painting acts on the viewer, pulling her into an engaged, living space with it. By inviting the viewer into the "free spot" with her, Owens switches the focus away from passive contemplation of a rarefied object to an active involvement.

But the institutional trappings of *Public Offerings* reduce work like this to high-culture novelty items. "One of the funny things about art is that if you act as if it doesn't have consequences, it doesn't," art critic David Pagel has written. "Its hold on viewers being consensual, and its powers reciprocal, art requires energized engagement if it's to have an effect, especially a sustained one."

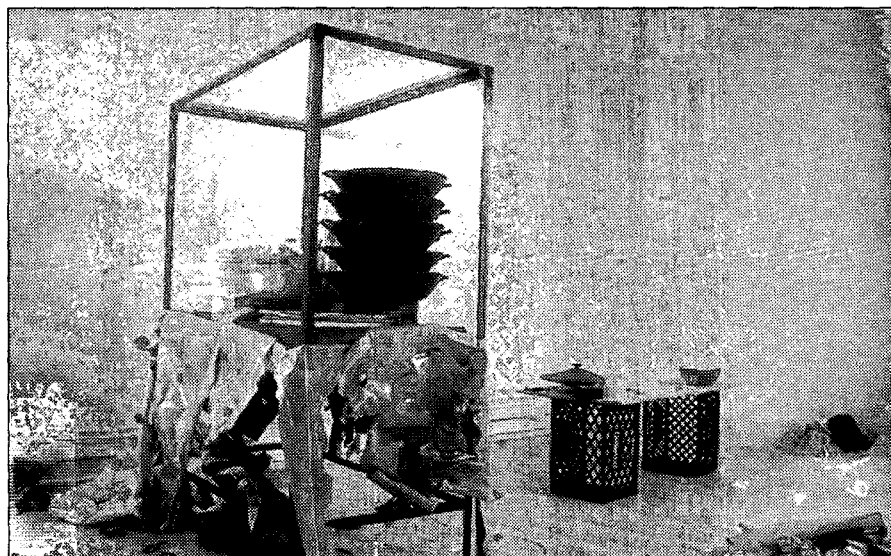
*Public Offerings* does nothing to really initiate this participation. Yet many of the pieces on display actually aim to



rekindle a direct lived experience with art. Participatory artworks, like Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Pad Thai*, in which he serves noodles to museum visitors, or Yutaka Sone's *Her 19th Foot*, a string of 19 modified unicycles connected to one another and an accompanying video of people trying to ride the unwieldy vehicle, advance the idea of art as an engaged community experience, not a distanced, cold affair. Tiravanija's piece is given especially short shrift in *Public Offerings* not only because it has been located outside of the exhibition area, completely cut off from the rest of the art, but because it is also only serving Pad Thai to museum patrons at the opening of the exhibition and on a few selected dates.

the curators' lack of a conceptual link between the 25 artists. The show is grouped neither by geography nor media nor subject matter. With no attempt made by the curators to compare the artists to one another, to analyze why we have this art now, the works become relics, husks emptied of the artists' issues and concerns.

Claiming art as a "free spot in society" begs the question: What is it free from? What makes it separate from other modes of cultural production? Certainly, it is not free from capital. Most artists would at least like to make a living, and galleries and museums need returns on their investments. Economic issues



Noodles, anyone?

This kind of art works temporally, by taking up space in the viewer's life, whether it be the few seconds it takes to get what is amiss in Owens' painting or the time required to consume a serving of Pad Thai. Most of the other artists work in this way as well, from the film and videos of Matthew Barney, Sharon Lockhart and Steve McQueen to the paintings of hospital doors by Gary Hume, which are so glossy all that can be seen in them is the viewer's own reflection.

*Public Offerings* fails to live up to the promise of the individual works. Each artist is displayed in his own claustrophobic space in the maze-like exhibition area. Each artwork is visually cut off from its neighbor, emphasizing

in the art world dominate who's in and who's out.

What art is free from is any sort of categorical form—unlike TV, film or literature, where deviations from the norm become "experimental" and marginalized. Even mainstream modern art encourages the active interpretation of viewers, whose participation becomes a necessary condition for the art to work. It's frustrating when museum shows like *Public Offerings* don't get it. They treat art like big-game pelts taken from the market, and tack them to the wall for display. ■

Karl Erickson is editor of *Cakewalk* magazine.

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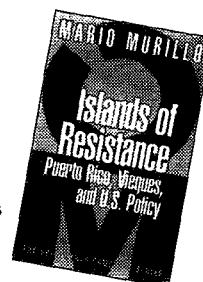
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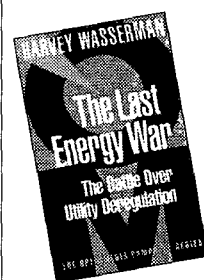
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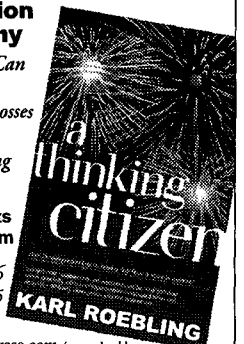
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## SYLVIA

By Nicole Hollander





*Continued from page 30*

Young People's Socialist League in high school, and he pedaled his bicycle around Hyde Park, the university neighborhood, nearly every night, going from meeting to demonstration to party. I rode on his handlebars, wondering whether I was to be a girlfriend or a comrade or the unthinkable both-at-once.

One night we squeezed into the backseat of a Volkswagen bug in front of the Student Peace Union office and drove the expressways to O'Hare Airport, where we met Madame Nhu, the powerful sister-in-law of President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam, as she disembarked from her plane. "Down with Diem!" we chanted. "Diem or democracy!" It was October 1963. Within a week, Diem had been assassinated and the escalating war in Vietnam had become a political issue on campus. With a teen-ager's grandiosity, I felt personally responsible.

Three weeks later, John F. Kennedy was assassinated. That night I sat on the floor of the dorm hallway with a string of other young women in a spontaneous vigil. My friendship with Len was strained a little by my guilt at having betrayed my Democratic heritage. I had dared to question the efficacy of President Kennedy's liberalism, and now he was dead and I was in mourning. Nevertheless, as I left campus for home in December, Len entrusted me with his treasured collection of socialist literature: a green net shopping bag full of classic Marxist documents and pamphlets by Hal Draper and Harvey Swados. I promised to show them to my dad.

I don't remember now whether I got Dad to look at any of the pamphlets that I pulled out of the bag and arrayed on the living-room coffee table. When I try to remember, I can only imagine the gold rims on his teeth flashing at my naïveté. But I will never forget what happened with the blue workshirt.

One late afternoon after Christmas, I met Dad in the kitchen as he came in from work. He was still jingling the car keys in his hand.

"Is it O.K. if I drive uptown?" I asked. "I need to go to Wards and buy a workshirt."

He peered at me through his glasses, one bushy eyebrow raised. "A workshirt?"

"Yeah. I want one to take back to school."

"Just a regular workshirt?"

"Uh-huh," I nodded. "A blue one, you know. People wear those at UC. They have them at Wards, don't they?"

"Aw, save your money," he said. "I can get you a workshirt if you want one."

There was a smirk at the corner of his mouth, but it appeared so often, prompted by so much in life, that I thought nothing of it. I went back to my spot behind the drop-leaf dining table at the end of the living room and huddled in front of the heat register with *The Brothers Karamazov*, trusting that my errand would get done.

The next afternoon I was too engrossed to jump up at the sound of the car in the driveway. It could have been Dmitri Karamazov's footsteps in the kitchen, for all the attention I was paying. Dad's voice roused me.

"Got a present for you," he said.

He was standing in the doorway with a piece of clothing rolled under his arm. Light blue mottled with white—there was no mistaking what it was. He held it out toward me, still rolled, and I felt the cotton as I reached to take it. It was soft to the

touch, not so stiff that it would stand out among my classmates' shirts as one newly acquired. Just as I grabbed for it, Dad's eyes squinted shut the way they do when he is struggling to contain laughter or tears, and he let the shirt unfurl in front of me. It was stained with hog blood.

My memory stops there. I can't say what happened next. I don't know if my mother cried, "Gordon! Get that smelly thing out of here," as I imagine she would have. I don't remember Dad rolling the shirt back up again and laying it on the breezeway table until the next morning, when he could tuck it back in his locker at the plant. If I took it, I didn't pack it with the rest of my clothes.

All I know for certain is that at this moment I realized I had truly left home. I would never have to take a job on the sliced bacon line, which was women's work in the meatpacking industry, nor would I live in dread of a phone call telling me that my husband was on his way to the hospital in an ambulance, having been hit in the head with a carcass or wounded by an errant blade sharp enough to sever joints and slice through bone. But neither could I leave home behind me entirely. When I wore the clean, blue workshirt that I ended up buying anyway, I did not feel like the girls from the Long Island suburbs who swished by me in the cafeteria line, looking chic in theirs. They had never seen a workshirt put to its intended use.

Like many of my peers, I struggled to get to the simple truth at the core of complex social issues, but everything I saw was refracted through a bloodstain that would not allow simplicity. I often felt as though I were invisible and watching from the sidelines as privileged white suburban kids playacted at being less fortunate than they were. When students occupied the administration building to protest the University of Chicago's complicity in submitting grade-point rankings to the selective service (local draft boards drew from the bottom of the rankings to fill their quotas), I stayed outside, wondering how the nurse's aides who had cared for me as a patient in the university hospital were getting by without their paychecks. Yet when the speakers at rallies on the administration building steps spoke in the name of the working class, I said nothing to identify myself. Playacting or not, the issues were critical. One of the few laborers' kids I had gotten to know dropped out in our junior year and was immediately drafted. His name is inscribed on The Wall in Washington.

If I count up the meetings I attended, the protests I marched in, the feminist position papers I wrote, I have sound enough credentials to qualify as a '60s activist. And the diploma on my bookcase confirms that Girl Intellectual simultaneously mastered the Life of the Mind. Yet I read "Ph.D." as "Packinghouse Daughter." I find that I still experience the world as a working-class kid away from home. I walk the line between a feisty fidelity to the people of my childhood and a refined repugnance for the work they had to do. And I can't recall the politically charged days of my young adulthood without also remembering my ambivalence, the dark blotch of reality on my sky blue illusions. ■

*Cheri Register is a writer in Minneapolis. This essay is excerpted from Packinghouse Daughter, her memoir of the historic 1959 strike against the Wilson & Co. meatpacking house in Albert Lea. Published last fall by the Minnesota Historical Society Press and winner of an American Book Award, Packinghouse Daughter will be released in paperback by HarperCollins on Labor Day.*

# The Blue Workshirt



By Cheri Register

**T**he early evening train pulled into Albert Lea, Minnesota with brakes squealing and slowed to a crawl alongside the Wilson & Co. meatpacking plant. The lamps at the corners of the parking lot cast the packinghouse itself in shadow, reminding me of a prison-break scene in some movie I had otherwise forgotten—a Hollywood movie, not one of the foreign films I now preferred. As we crossed the channel where I used to watch for giant goldfish while Mom waited in the car for Dad to get off work, I could see the depot glowing up ahead. My folks—the word “parents,” like “my father,” still sounded haughty to me—were standing outside, shivering in the December cold and wearing the self-conscious smiles that hold back tears. I knew my dad had already made the rounds to tell everyone whom he was expecting: his youngest daughter, that smart girl who won all the scholarships, the one that got her picture in *Wilson Certified News*. She was coming home, on break from the University of Chicago.

I stepped off the train looking like something you might pull out of a cocoon that had cracked open mid-metamorphosis. My hair was growing out of the bubble-do still fashionable at Albert Lea High School, but it was not yet long enough to pull back in a barrette at the nape of my neck. Living in a dormitory full of New Yorkers had put an edge of affectation on my southern Minnesota corn-belt

speech, and I was wearing dangly clip-on earrings while I worked up the courage to get my ears pierced. I had an errand to complete over the holidays: Buy a blue workshirt—one I could knot at the waist above the new jeans that I wore rolled in a wide cuff halfway up my calf, usually over leather sandals.

I hadn't expected the University of Chicago to require a fashion statement. I had already fashioned an identity for myself, in high school, that needed no uniform: Girl Intellectual. I had thought myself well suited for the Life of the Mind that the brochures and catalogs promised. By the end of fall quarter, though, I learned that I would have to dress more deliberately. Manhattan-style sophistication was beyond my capacity, so I opted for quick identification. The workshirt would ally me with the campus radicals, who used fashion to decry fashion. The serviceable blue denim of workshirt and jeans was a political statement, a mark of allegiance with the workers of the world. I could be comfortable in that, I thought. Getting the workshirt in Albert Lea would be less trouble than shopping in Chicago. I figured I could buy one from my dad's sister Vivian at Montgomery Wards.

**M**y dad was the focus of another vacation project. A packinghouse millwright who had always trusted the union and Hubert Humphrey's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, he was, I knew, just waiting to be awakened to a broader vision. Hadn't he taught me that rich people aren't happy, that Republicans will do you in for money, that “we ... the little guys ... the ordinary working people” are little and ordinary precisely because we are too moral to do what it takes to get

**I opted for quick identification. The workshirt would ally me with the campus radicals, who used fashion to decry fashion.**

rich? I had come home eager to discuss with him the socialist ideas that were beginning to satisfy my longings for a just and responsible life.

My first week in college, I had met a boy named Len—short for Lenin, my dormmates guessed—who was a real socialist and not just toying with the label. He had joined the

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